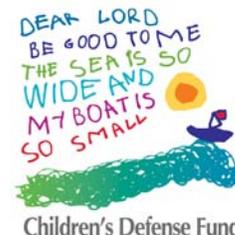


Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Massachusetts



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Full-day kindergarten (Full-Day K) is a necessary component of a comprehensive early learning continuum and boosts children's cognitive learning, creative problem-solving and social competence. However, Full-Day K is not part of the K-12 publicly funded school system in most states. Nationally, only 10 states and the District of Columbia require school districts to provide publicly funded Full-Day K through statute. Thirty-four states require school districts to provide at least half-day kindergarten and six have no requirement.

Are Massachusetts school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ___ Yes X No

During the 2010-2011 school year there were 67,496 students enrolled in kindergarten. Eighty percent of those students were enrolled in Full-Day K.ⁱⁱ Overall, there were 80,281 5-year-olds in the state and approximately 84 percent of them were enrolled in some form of kindergarten.ⁱⁱⁱ

Statutory Provisions

- Each school district may establish its own minimum permissible age for school attendance, provided that such age is not older than the mandatory minimum school age of 6 established in statute.^{iv}
- All public school districts must provide 425 hours of kindergarten instruction per school year or 2.5 hours per day per academic year.^v
- Class size for kindergarten in Massachusetts shall not exceed an average of 25 students.^{vi}

Funding

- Massachusetts' Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant program provides state funding to improve existing Full-Day K programs. Close to \$20 million is divided among the districts that enter into the grant process and abide by the priorities and procedures written by the state. The program supports high quality educational programs for children in Full-Day K classrooms by improving the quality of curriculum and classroom environment, providing continuity of curriculum across preschool, kindergarten, and grades 1-3, and developing other programmatic components of kindergarten.^{vii}
- In order for districts to receive funding from the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant program, kindergarten must be a minimum of five instructional hours, five days a week for 180 days per school year.^{viii}

Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in July 2010.^{ix}
- The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for English Language Arts and Mathematics based on these standards.
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^x

Assessment

- A statewide kindergarten readiness assessment is part of the mandate of the Massachusetts' Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Any child entering kindergarten must have a comprehensive health and developmental examination.^{xi}

ⁱ National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. "Kindergarten requirements, by State: 2010."

http://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tab5_3.asp

ⁱⁱ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. "School/District Profiles." <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Strategies for Children. "Full-Day Kindergarten Fact Sheet (2011)."

http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/6research_summaries/07_FDK_Factsheet.pdf

^{iv} Kindertartens: Minimum School Age. *Code of Massachusetts Regulations* § 603. 8.00

^v Ibid

^{vi} Kindergarten. *Code of Massachusetts Regulations* § 603. 8.01

^{vii} Ibid

^{viii} Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. "Grants and Other Financial Assistance Programs: FY2011; Quality Full-Day Kindergarten." <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/grants/grants11/rfp/701.html>

^{ix} Common Core State Standards Initiative. "In the States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

^x Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.

^{xi} Education Commission of the States. "State Notes." <http://www.ecs.org/html/educationissues/StateNotes/2010-StateNotes.pdf>