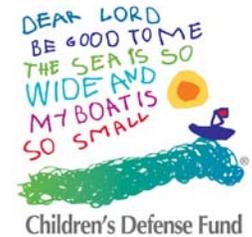


Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Minnesota



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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 a 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 Minnesota school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ___ Yes Xⁱ No

During the 2009-2010 school year, there were 333 elementary and secondary independent school districts containing 1,992 schools. Of those schools, 943 were elementary schools serving 63,172 kindergarteners.ⁱⁱ

Statutory Provisions

- Districts are required to offer at least half-day kindergarten programs to all eligible children.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Students must be 5 years old by September 1st to attend kindergarten.^{iv}
- The compulsory age of education is 7 years old.^v
- The minimum number of hours of instruction for kindergarten is 425 hours per school year.^{vi}

Funding

- Kindergarten students are counted as 0.612 pupil units in the state's funding formula. In contrast, 1st grade students are counted as 1.115.^{vii}

Standards

- Kindergarten standards are aligned with elementary and secondary expectations.^{viii}

Assessment

- A child may not enter kindergarten unless the parent has provided proof that he/she has undergone developmental screening.^{ix}
- Districts may develop readiness assessments for children age 3 to age of kindergarten entrance. The assessment must be "aligned with the state early childhood learning guidelines and kindergarten standards."^x
- A school readiness program provider must assess each child's cognitive skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to inform program planning and parents, and promote kindergarten readiness.^{xi}

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

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

ⁱⁱ Minnesota Data Guide. http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/Data_Downloads/index.html

ⁱⁱⁱ School Board Powers; Enrollment. *Minnesota Statute* § 124D.02

^{iv} Ibid

^vCompulsory Instruction. *Minnesota Statute* § 120A.22

^{vi} Definition of Pupil Units. *Minnesota Statute* § 126C.05

^{vii} Ibid

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

^{ix} School Board Responsibilities. *Minnesota Statute*. § 121A.17

^x School Readiness Programs. *Minnesota Statute*. § 124D.15

^{xi} Ibid