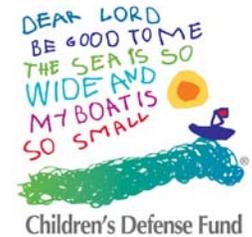


Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Texas



January 2012

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

Statutory Provisions

- Districts must offer kindergarten.ⁱⁱ
- Kindergarten attendance is not mandatory. Upon enrollment in kindergarten, students are subject to compulsory school attendance rules.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In order to attend kindergarten a child must be at least 5 years of age on September 1st of the school year.^{iv}
- The board of trustees of each school district may decide whether to operate half-day kindergarten or Full-Day K.^v
- Full-Day K shall be at least seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses. A half-day program is a minimum of three hours.^{vi}
- A school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten class.^{vii}

Funding

- Full-Day K is funded at 1.0 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) and half-day kindergarten is funded at .5 FTE.^{viii}

Standards

- Texas implements the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards for kindergarten.^{ix}
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^x

Assessment

- The Kindergarten TEKS are not an assessment, but they identify the skills and concepts that 5-year-olds are expected to know and are able to do by the completion of the kindergarten year. The TEKS apply to both full- and half-day programs.^{xi}
- The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is administered annually beginning in grade three. However, each school district shall administer, for grades K-2, a reading instrument on the list adopted by the commissioner or by the district-level committee.^{xii}

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

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

ⁱⁱ Free Kindergarten. *Texas Education Code*. §29.151.

-
- ⁱⁱⁱ Compulsory School Attendance. *Texas Education Code*. §25.085.
- ^{iv} Free Kindergarten. *Texas Education Code*. §29.151.
- ^v Operation of Kindergartens on Half-Day or Full-Day Basis. *Texas Education Code*. §29.152.
- ^{vi} School Day; Pledges of Allegiance; Minute of Silence. *Texas Education Code*. §25.082.
- ^{vii} Class Size. *Texas Education Code*. §25.112.
- ^{viii} Personal Communication. E-mail from Texas Department of Education – School Finance on November 14, 2011.
- ^{ix} Texas Education Association. “Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.” <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6148>
- ^x Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.
- ^{xi} Texas Education Association Division of Curriculum Early Childhood Division, 2009. “Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.” <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=5921>
- ^{xii} Ibid