



Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Texas

January 2013

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 other 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 while they are enrolled.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 a half-day or a full-day kindergarten.**^v
- **A full-day program shall be at least seven hours each day including intermissions and recesses.**^{vi} **A half-day program is a minimum of three hours.**^{vii}
- **Each school district must maintain an average teacher to student ratio of 1 to 20. A school district may not enroll more than 22 students in a kindergarten class.**^{viii}

Funding

- Kindergarten students who attend full-day receive full-day funding and kindergarten students who attend half-day receive half-day funding.^{ix}
- The commissioner may make grants to school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to expand half-day kindergarten to Full-Day K.^x

Standards

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

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.^{xiv}
- The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills is administered annually beginning in grade three. However, each school district shall administer, at the kindergarten, first, and second grade levels, a reading instrument on the list adopted by the commissioner or by the district-level committee.^{xv xvi}

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- ⁱ Operation of kindergartens on a half-day or full-day basis. *Texas Education Code* §29.152.
- 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 a 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} Texas Education Agency Division of Curriculum. "Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions and Answers." <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=5921>. Accessed January 2013.
- ^{viii} Class Size. *Texas Education Code* §25.112.
- ^{ix} Personal Communication. E-mail from Texas Department of Education – School Finance on November 14, 2011.
- ^x Kindergarten and prekindergarten grants. *Texas Education Code* § 29.155
- ^{xi} English Language Arts and Reading, Kindergarten, Beginning with School Year 2009-2010. *Texas Administrative Code* § 110.11
- ^{xii} Kindergarten, Adopted 2012. *Texas Administrative Code* § 111.2.
- ^{xiii} Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.
- ^{xiv} Texas Education Agency Division of Curriculum. "Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions and Answers." <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=5921>. Accessed January 2013.
- ^{xv} Ibid
- ^{xvi} Reading diagnosis. *Texas Education Code* § 28.006.