



# Children's Defense Fund

## Full-Day Kindergarten in Louisiana

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

### Statutory Provisions

- **Kindergarten attendance is mandatory.**<sup>ii</sup>
- **Children must be 5 years old on or before September 30<sup>th</sup> of the school year.**<sup>iii</sup> The youngest age a child may attend school is one year prior to first-grade age, which is 6 years old, on or before September 30<sup>th</sup>.<sup>iv</sup>
- **The minimum school day shall include 360 minutes of instructional time, exclusive of recess, lunch and planning periods for grades prekindergarten through twelfth grade.**<sup>v</sup>
- **For funding purposes, the teacher to student ratio is 1 to 20.**<sup>vi</sup>

### Funding

- Kindergarten is funded on the same level as grades 1-3. Local school boards must adopt a minimum foundation program and formula for the equitable allocation of minimum foundation funds to parish and city school systems. In adopting such program and formula, boards must set funding at the classroom teacher to student ratio of 1 to 20 for grades K-3.<sup>vii</sup>

### Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in July 2010.<sup>viii</sup>
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.<sup>ix</sup>

### Assessment

- If a student does not attend a full-day, full-year kindergarten, the Local Education Authority is authorized to administer an academic readiness screening.<sup>x</sup>
- The governing authority of each public school requires that every child entering kindergarten for the first time be given a valid and reliable readiness assessment. The results are used for measuring student readiness for kindergarten and for planning instruction.<sup>xi</sup>
- Each child entering kindergarten for the first time is assessed at the beginning of the school year. The parent or guardian of each child shall be advised of the nature of the child's level of readiness.<sup>xii</sup>
- Every child in public school in grades K-3 shall be screened, at least once, for the existence of impediments to successful school experience.<sup>xiii</sup> These impediments include dyslexia and related disorders, attention deficit disorder and social and environmental factors that put a child at risk.<sup>xiv xv</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Kindergarten; establishment; entrance age. *Louisiana Revised Statute* §17:151.3

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- ii Ibid.
- iii Ibid.
- iv Age of School Entrance; Proof Of Age. *Louisiana Revised Statute § 17:222*
- v Curriculum; Length of School Period. *Louisiana Revised Statute § 17:154*
- vi Duties, Functions, and Responsibilities Of Board. *Louisiana Revised Statutes § 17:7*
- vii Ibid.
- viii Common Core State Standard Initiative. "In The States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>
- ix Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.
- x Kindergarten; Establishment; Entrance Age. *Louisiana Revised Statute §17:151.3*
- xi School readiness assessment. *Louisiana Revised Statute § 17:391.11*
- xii Ibid.
- xiii Ibid.
- xiv Screening and intervention; purpose; applicability. *Louisiana Revised Statute § 17:392.1*
- xv