



Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Minnesota

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

During the 2011-2012 school year, there were 333 elementary and secondary independent school districts containing 1,968 schools, including 148 charter schools. Out of these schools, 861 were elementary schools serving 57,432 kindergarteners. The number of kindergarten students receiving free, full-day, every day kindergarten was 28,076 in the 2011-2012 school year.

Statutory Provisions

- Districts are required to offer at least half-day kindergarten programs to all eligible children.ⁱⁱ
- Students must be 5 years old by September 1st of the current year to attend kindergarten.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The compulsory age of education is 7 years old.^{iv}
- The minimum number of hours of instruction for kindergarten is 425 per school year.^v
- Districts must use revenue to maintain an average teacher to student ratio of 1 to 17 in grades K-3.^{vi}

Funding

- Kindergarten students are counted as .612 pupil units in the state's funding formula. In contrast, first grade students are counted as 1.115 pupil units.^{vii}
- Some Minnesota districts charge parents tuition to pay for Full-Day K.^{viii}

Standards

- Kindergarten standards are aligned with elementary and secondary expectations.^{ix}
- Minnesota adopted the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, but not Mathematics.^x
- Kindergarten standards for language arts, mathematics, science, and arts are in rule. Kindergarten standards for social studies are referenced in statute and when revisions to these standards are completed, they will be put through rulemaking. Kindergarten standards for physical education are referenced in statute.^{xi}

Assessment

- A child may not enter kindergarten unless the parent has provided proof that he/she has undergone developmental screening through the Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening program or comparable screening program.^{xii}
- The Early Childhood Screening program targets children between the ages of 3 and 4 years to enable further health assessment or education evaluation one to two years prior to kindergarten entry.^{xiii}
- Districts may develop readiness assessments for children from age 3 to kindergarten entrance. The assessment must be aligned with the state early childhood curriculum and instruction.^{xiv}

- 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.^{xv}

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

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ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

^{iv} Compulsory Instruction. *Minnesota Statute* § 120A.22

^v Definition of Pupil Units. *Minnesota Statute* § 126C.05

^{vi} Learning and Development Revenue Amount and Use. *Minnesota Statute* § 126C.12.

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

^{viii} Buffalo Hanover Montrose Schools. "All-Day Every Day Kindergarten." <http://www.bhmschools.org/departments/teaching-learning/kindergarten-options>. Accessed January 2013.

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

^x Peterson, Debby Kay. 2012. E-mail correspondence. June 12..

^{xi} O'Sullivan, B. 2011. Personal correspondence. December 5.

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

^{xiii} Peterson, Debby Kay. 2012. E-mail correspondence. June 12. Minnesota Statutes 121A.17

^{xiv} Ibid.

^{xv} School Readiness Programs. *Minnesota Statute*. § 124D.15