



Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Montana

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

Statutory Provisions

- Kindergarten attendance is not mandatory.ⁱⁱ
- Students who will be 5 years old on or before September 10th of the school year may attend kindergarten. Children can also be enrolled by special permission of the board of trustees.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The school fiscal year begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th. Three hundred and sixty hours are required for a half-day kindergarten program and 720 hours for a Full-Day K program.^{iv}
- There are no requirements for teacher to student ratio or class size in statute in Montana. Montana's Full-Time Kindergarten Model Curriculum suggests a teacher to student ratio of 1 to 20.^v

Funding

- For the purpose of calculating average number belonging (ANB) in the state funding formula, Full-Day K is given the same weight as other grades, and half-day kindergarten is counted at half-time enrollment. For a district that is transitioning from a half-time to a full-time kindergarten program, the state superintendent shall count kindergarten enrollment in the previous year as full-time enrollment for the purpose of calculating ANB for the elementary programs offering full-time kindergarten in the current year.^{vi}
- "BASE" school aid is equal for grades K-6.^{vii}

Standards

- The Montana Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted in November 2011.^{viii} During the 2012-2013 school year, schools will align with the CCSS and in the 2013-2014 school year they will fully implement the CCSS.^{ix}
- Kindergarten learning expectations are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^x

Assessment

- Montana statute doesn't specify assessment requirements.^{xi}

ⁱ School Fiscal Year. *Montana Code Annotated* § 20-1-301

ⁱⁱ Kindergarten and Preschool Programs. *Montana Code Annotated* § 20-7-117

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid

^{iv} School Fiscal Year. *Montana Code Annotated* § 20-1-301

^v Montana's Office of Public Instruction 2009. "Montana Full-Time Kindergarten Model Curriculum Guide 2009.

^{vi} <http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/FTK/09FTKCurriculum.pdf>

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- ^{vi} Calculation of average number belonging (ANB) -- three-year averaging. *Montana Code Annotated* § 20-9-311.
- ^{vii} Definitions. *Montana Code Annotated* § 20-9-306.
- ^{viii} Common Core State Standards Initiative. "In the States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>
- ^{ix} Barclay, Terri. 2012. E-mail correspondence. June 25.
- ^x Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.
- ^{xi} Education Commission of the States. "Kindergarten Database." <http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=8>