



Children's Defense Fund

Full-Day Kindergarten in Wisconsin

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 Wisconsin school districts required by statute to fund Full-Day K for all eligible students? ___ Yes Xⁱ No
In 2011-2012, 386 districts offered Full-Day K only, 40 districts offered both half-day kindergarten and Full-Day K, and three districts offered half-day kindergarten only.ⁱⁱ

Statutory Provisions

- Students are required to complete 5-year-old kindergarten as a prerequisite to being admitted to first grade in a public school.ⁱⁱⁱ
- To be eligible for 5-year-old kindergarten, a child must be 5 by September 1st of the school year.^{iv}
- Full-Day K must be offered for the same amount of hours as first grade.^v
- State statute requires an annual schedule of at least 437 hours of direct pupil instruction in kindergarten.^{vi}
- Class size is determined at the district level unless a school is receiving a reading achievement grant. Schools receiving these grants must maintain a class size of 18 in grades K-3.^{vii}

Funding

- A part-day kindergarten pupil is counted as one-half pupil for state funding. A pupil in Full-Day K is counted as one pupil.^{viii}

Standards

- The Common Core State Standards were adopted in June 2010.^{ix}
- Districts are advised to also consider the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards to assure a comprehensive approach.^x These early learning standards are aligned with elementary and secondary standards.^{xi}

Assessment

- Some school districts screen incoming students to determine needed support services. Districts develop their own process for assessing educational program that meets the needs of the children.^{xii}
- 5-year-old kindergarten will begin doing reading screening in the 2012-2013 school year.^{xiii}

ⁱ Definitions. *Wisconsin Statute* § 121.004.

ⁱⁱ Wisconsin Department of Public Education. "Public School Program Data." <http://dpi.wi.gov/lbstat/progdata.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ High school graduation standards; criteria for promotion. *Wisconsin Statute* §118.33

^{iv} Age of pupils; Phase in of 4-year-old kindergarten. *Wisconsin Statute* § 118.14

^v Definitions. *Wisconsin Statute* § 121.004.

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- ^{vi} School district standards. *Wisconsin Statute § 121.02*
- ^{vii} Achievement Guarantee Contracts; State Aid. *Wisconsin Statute § 118-43.*
- ^{viii} Definitions. *Wisconsin Statute § 121.004.*
- ^{ix} Common Core State Standards Initiative. "In the States." <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>
- ^x Rebecca Vail. 2011. E-mail correspondence. November 14.
- ^{xi} Transitions and Alignments. (2011, January). Education Week, Quality Counts. 30 (16) pg 50.
- ^{xii} Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. "Admissions and Early Entrance to Four- and Five-Year-Old Kindergarten." <http://dpi.wi.gov/ec/ec-entr-admiss.html>. Accessed January 2013.
- ^{xiii} Haglund, Jill. 2012. E-mail correspondence. June 14.