

# AMSD Position on Full-Day Kindergarten

**T**he Association of Metropolitan School Districts supports state funding for full-day kindergarten for all of Minnesota's children.

## AMSD BELIEVES

- All children in Minnesota should have access to a high quality, full-day kindergarten program in their local school district.
- Full-day kindergarten has been shown to improve student achievement across all racial and ethnic groups.
- Full-day kindergarten reduces the need for more expensive intervention and remedial services.
- The state should either fund full-day kindergarten or grant levy authority to locally elected school boards so they can implement full-day kindergarten, and meet the need for additional space for this instruction.

Several recent studies have shown significant academic benefits for full-day kindergarten students compared to their half-day peers:

- A 2005 U of M study found that full-day kindergarten students in District 191 (Burnsville/Savage/Eagan) had higher scores than their half-day counterparts in all three measures monitored. The three measures used were recognition of upper case letters, recognition of lower case letters, and counting to 100. Follow-up studies have shown that the gains realized resulting from full-day kindergarten have been maintained in subsequent years.
- A 2005 study by researchers at the University of Michigan examined 8,000 children in public kindergarten programs across the country. The study found that full-day kindergarteners learn more over the course of the year than their half-day counterparts – the equivalent of about an extra month of schooling.
- A 2002 study by the Minneapolis Public Schools showed significant gains in fundamental reading skills for students of all ethnic backgrounds enrolled in full-day kindergarten compared to their half-day peers. The study also showed the advantages of providing intervention along with full-day kindergarten to students from diverse backgrounds.
- A 2002 study of Philadelphia school children showed that full-day kindergarten students were twice as likely to reach third and fourth grade on time compared to students with no kindergarten

experience and 26 percent more likely than students who graduated from half-day programs.

- The study calculated that the higher retention rates for Philadelphia's full-day classes reduced the cost of educating these students by 19 percent. The researchers calculated that in 1999 dollars the higher retention rates saved approximately \$2 million for every 1,000 kindergartners.
- The full-day graduates were more likely to score better on standardized reading and math tests, receive better grades, and attend school more often than students who hadn't attended full-day kindergarten programs.

- District 622 (North St Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools) implemented free full-day kindergarten in 2006 (before 2006-2007 it was available on a fee basis). Focus groups of first grade teachers who experienced the transition were nearly unanimous in finding full-day kindergarten students better prepared for first grade. In addition, District 622's data files show that from 2005 to 2008, students who were in its full-day kindergarten program met district reading proficiency benchmarks at the end of second grade at rates between 2% and 14% higher than their half-day counterparts. The same was true of math, with the exception of 2006, when full-day kindergarten students achieved proficiency at rates 5% to 8% higher than half-day students.



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