

**Senate Bill 44**

**Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Committee**

**RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



**September 23, 2010**

**Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Committee Report**

**RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## **Executive Summary**

Senate Bill 44 directs the Oregon Department of Education to form the Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Committee. The committee is responsible for making policy recommendations to the 2011 Oregon Legislative Assembly through a report due October 1, 2010.

**Purpose of the Committee:** The purpose of the committee is to aid and advise the Legislative Assembly, school districts, and public charter schools in developing and providing full-day kindergarten programs by the 2012-2013 school year.

**Responsibilities of the Committee:** The Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Committee shall submit a report and provide proposed legislation to the interim legislative committees related to education no later than October 1, 2010. The report and proposed legislation:

- Shall establish a method for providing funding for full-day kindergarten programs to school districts and public charter schools that offer full-day kindergarten programs.
- May consider options for phasing in funding described in paragraph (a) of this subsection
- May not consider issues or propose legislation that is not related to the implementation of full-day kindergarten programs.

The Committee shall provide school districts and public charter schools with resources to determine whether to implement full-day kindergarten programs and how to implement full-day kindergarten programs. The resources may include technical expertise related to capital needs, enrollment trends, funding requirements, best practices for providing full-day kindergarten, and other information a school district or public charter school may require.

**Committee Recommendations:** By a unanimous vote, the Committee recommends mandating full-day kindergarten for all Oregon public school students beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.

### **Type of Kindergarten Program to Be Offered in Oregon**

The committee recommends requiring Oregon school districts to provide full-day kindergarten for all Oregon public school students to ensure equal access and equity no later than the 2015-2016 school year. Prior to the 2015-2016 school year, school districts have the option of providing full-day kindergarten.

### **Funding for Kindergarten Programs**

The committee recommends changing the State School Fund distribution formula to a full weight (1.0) for each enrolled kindergarten student, beginning with the 2015-2016 school year. Currently, the formula allows only a .5 weight for each enrolled kindergarten student, regardless of whether the student is attending half-day or full-day kindergarten. Until the 2015-2016 school year, school districts would be allowed to charge tuition for full-day kindergarten. Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, districts would not be allowed to charge tuition for full-day kindergarten.

### **Funding Implementation Timeline**

- 2011-2013 biennium = half-weight (.5) and full-day kindergarten optional
- 2013-2015 biennium = half-weight (.5) and full-day kindergarten optional
- 2015-2017 biennium = mandate for full-day kindergarten begins with 2015-2016 school year; all districts offer only full-day kindergarten and receive full-weight (1.0).

## **Capital Needs**

- The committee recommends that capital construction remain the responsibility of each local school district.
- The committee recommends that the Legislature consider preparations for full-day kindergarten as a priority for Measure 68 funds.

## **Attendance**

- The committee recommends maintaining current compulsory attendance beginning at the age of 7. See 339.010 below for current wording.

**339.010 School attendance required; age limits.** Except as provided in ORS 339.030, all children between the ages of 7 and 18 years who have not completed the 12th grade are required to attend regularly a public full-time school of the school district in which the child resides. [Amended by 1965 c.100 §274]

- The committee recommends changing one component of the attendance law: for any child who enrolls in kindergarten prior to age 7, attendance is required, just as it is for all children between the ages of 7 and 18 years. This change would be effective with the 2015-2016 school year. See 339.020 below for current wording.

**339.020 Duty to send children to school.** Except as provided in ORS 339.030, every person having control of any child between the ages of 7 and 18 years who has not completed the 12th grade is required to send such child to and maintain such child in regular attendance at a public full-time school during the entire school term. [Amended by 1965 c.100 §275; 1969 c.160 §1]

The Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Committee members appreciate the opportunity provided by the Legislature to study and deliberate on how best to implement full-day kindergarten in Oregon's public schools. The Committee also appreciates the financially difficult times and the extreme challenges in funding K-12 schools during the foreseeable future. Throughout this process, the Committee has considered current circumstances and endeavored to make recommendations that are feasible, practical, and sustainable.

For additional information, please view the documents related to the work of this committee and kindergarten resources at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=2818>

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Twain, Chair

Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Committee  
September 23, 2010

## Introduction

Providing a full-day kindergarten option is good for students, particularly those students who face the consequences of poverty and limited English proficiency. The committee reviewed the data and heard from experts, and it is very clear that full-day kindergarten helps close the achievement gap for low-income students, students whose first language is not English, and minority students. A quality pre-kindergarten program followed by full-day kindergarten may be the best instructional program available to prepare students who start out behind their peers.

The Governor and the Legislature have made tremendous investments in Oregon Pre-Kindergarten Head Start (OPK), and full-day kindergarten is the next logical phase of the early childhood education continuum. With full-day kindergarten, students are more likely to maximize the early gains made in OPK and other quality pre-kindergarten programs.

Full-day kindergarten is smart state spending. There is more and more research showing that investing in kindergarten programs reduces the number of students that need more costly remediation later in school, reduces delinquency, reduces the early onset of drug and alcohol abuse, and lowers crime and incarceration rates. Providing full-day kindergarten makes good sense as an investment in our children and for the Oregon taxpayer.

Full-day kindergarten is happening in Oregon. There has been tremendous growth in the number of children attending full-day kindergarten programs. Today, there are almost 14,000 kindergartners in over 100 Oregon school districts attending full-day programs. These districts are choosing to offer full-day kindergarten even without additional state resources to pay for it. This is a program that has support from parents and a majority of school districts across the state; it is time to be responsive to this new reality in our schools and to support these programs financially.

During the 2007-2009 biennium, when school districts were given the option of spending School Improvement Fund (SIF) dollars on full-day kindergarten programs, 10% of the SIF funds were spent on full-day programs.

Given budget realities in Oregon, the committee does not believe it is possible to develop a plan or legislation to provide full-day kindergarten programs by the 2012-2013 school year as called for by Senate Bill 44. However, a majority of the Committee members has concluded that the only way to achieve this important change is to set a date certain for the required implementation of universal access to full-day kindergarten in all Oregon public elementary schools. Upon that date, all districts would be expected to offer full-day kindergarten, and all districts would receive a full weight in the distribution formula for each enrolled kindergarten student.

Almost 14,000—more than 1 out of every 3—kindergarten students are attending a full-day program. These students are enrolled in 100 school districts in hundreds of classrooms in cities from Portland to Prineville. This is a 25% increase over the number of full-day kindergarten students just three years ago – and this is occurring without adequate state funding. School districts are making this work by using school improvement funds, Title I federal dollars, charging tuition, and allocating district funds.

Districts are making full-day kindergarten happen because the research on the benefits is clear, and there is strong consensus in the education community that

- Children in full-day programs, on average, make greater gains in their reading achievement scores compared to those in half-day programs.
- Children in full-day programs, on average, make greater gains in their math achievement scores compared to those in half-day programs.
- Full-day kindergarten students are less likely to be held back a grade or referred to special education programs.
- Full-day kindergarten programs are effective in closing the achievement gap between students who come from differing economic and racial backgrounds.
- Full-day programs have longer lasting academic benefits for poor children.

### **Enabling Legislation**

Senate Bill 44 includes the following two requirements:

**SB 44 Requirement #1:** *“The Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Committee established by section 3 of this 2009 Act shall submit a report and provide proposed legislation to the interim legislative committees related to education no later than October 1, 2010. The report and proposed legislation:*

- (a) Shall establish a method for providing funding for full-day kindergarten programs to school districts and public charter schools that offer full-day kindergarten programs.*
- (b) May consider options for phasing in funding described in paragraph (a) of this subsection.*
- (c) May not consider issues or propose legislation that is not related to the implementation of full-day kindergarten programs.”*

**SB 44 Requirement #2:** *“The committee shall provide school districts and public charter schools with resources to determine whether to implement full-day kindergarten programs and how to implement full-day kindergarten programs. The resources may include technical expertise related to capital needs, enrollment trends, funding requirements, best practices for providing full-day kindergarten, and other information a school district or public charter school may require.”*

A full copy of Senate Bill 44 can be found at

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/sb0001.dir/sb0044.en.pdf>

## **Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Committee Members**

Karen Twain, Chair  
Principal, Metzger Elementary – Tigard-Tualatin School District

Valerie Sebesta, Vice-Chair  
Uniserv Consultant – Oregon Education Association

Kristen Buffaloe  
Parent Representative – Hillsboro School District

Don Grotting  
Superintendent – David Douglas School District

Brenda Lewis  
Administrator for Special Programs and Title I Programs K - 8 – Beaverton School District

Patti McLeod  
Oregon School Boards Association and Hillsboro School Board

Pat Mickiewicz  
ESL/Kindergarten Teacher – Boones Ferry School – West Linn/Wilsonville SD

Colette Peters  
Director – Oregon Youth Authority

Annie Soto  
Executive Director – Head Start of Lane County

Kevin Spooner  
Principal – Oak Grove Elementary School – North Clackamas SD

Jean Underhill  
Reading Teacher and Educational Assistant – Lake Grove Elementary – Lake Oswego SD

### **Legislative Advisors**

Senator Mark Hass – Chair, Senate Committee on Education and General Government  
Senator Jeff Kruse – Vice-Chair, Senate Committee on Education and General Government  
Representative Sara Gelsler – Chair, House Education Committee  
Representative Sherrie Sprenger – Vice - Chair, House Education Committee

### **Committee Staff**

Catherine Heaton, Department of Education  
Morgan Allen, Department of Education  
Barbara Conreaux, Department of Education

## **Making the Case for Full-Day Kindergarten**

The kindergarten year is a significant milestone in the lives of young children and their families. For each child, a smooth transition into kindergarten and a successful school year provide the foundation for the child's academic achievement throughout the school career.

Public perception of kindergarten is often *wiggly, cute little kids playing and giggling*. However, in reality, the kindergarten year is of vital importance. The kindergarten year is the bridge between pre-kindergarten early childhood education and the primary grades of elementary school. Kindergarten shares some components with both sides of the bridge but is not fully integrated into either world; however, the strength of that bridge—of the kindergarten program—has a direct impact on the efficiency and success of the entire Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 12 education system.

Enrollment in full-day kindergarten varies widely across states and communities. Nationwide, enrollment ranges from 83% in the South to 23% in the West, with the Northeast and Midwest at 41% and 45% respectively. On average, 60% of U.S. kindergarten children attend full-day programs. In Oregon, 34% of kindergarten children were enrolled in full-day kindergarten during the 2009-2010 school year.

In addition to the information required in this report by Senate Bill 44, the Committee would like to share information with the Legislature and general public about why full-day kindergarten is a good investment for Oregon's students and public schools.

### **FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN IS A SMART INVESTMENT**

Full-day kindergarten for all young Oregon children will increase access to instruction. This investment will ultimately save the state money by increasing early success in school that will compound success across all grades, diminish the achievement gap, and provide a seamless system of PK–Grade 12 educational services.

*“Although there have been long-standing debates about how much the early years matter in the scheme of lifelong development, our conclusion is unequivocal: what happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot, not because this period of development provides an indelible blueprint for well-being, but because it sets either a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows.”*

*J.P. Shonkoff and D.A. Phillips, From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000.*

Through results of extensive brain research, scientists and the public are increasingly knowledgeable about the impact of early experiences on maturation and social, emotional, and cognitive development. Quality learning experiences in the early years can promote favorable outcomes for children in school and later in adult life. Therefore, maximizing the time in kindergarten to provide more opportunities for instruction and socialization makes good sense.

## **CHILDREN WHO ATTEND FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN LEARN MORE**

Many educational research studies have focused on the differences in results for children who attend full-day kindergarten as compared to half-day programs. The United States Department of Education has funded two national-level studies with the following findings:

- Children enrolled in full-day programs made greater gains in reading/language arts and mathematics than those enrolled in half-day classes.
- Full-day kindergarten provides for greater academic achievement and social and behavioral development.
- Full-day kindergarten provides teachers with flexibility to devote more time to research-based instructional methods.

Children who attend full-day kindergarten are better prepared than those in half-day programs. The investment in full-day kindergarten promotes student achievement.

## **FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN REDUCES THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP**

Social and economic factors create achievement gaps even before children enter kindergarten. Preschool alone is not enough to equalize these gaps which are likely to endure and become even more difficult to close as children grow older. Research studies substantiate the common sense conclusion that the more time children spend in quality education programs, the more they learn and the more they succeed in later schooling. Full-day kindergarten for all young Oregon children will optimize children's early learning opportunities.

*"Long before children knock on the kindergarten door – during the crucial period from birth to age five when humans learn more than during any other five-year period – forces have already been put in place that encourage some children to 'shine' and fulfill their potential in school and life while other forces stunt the growth and development of children who have just as much potential. The cost to the nation in terms of talent unfulfilled and lives of promise wasted is enormous."*

*Demographer Harold Hodgkinson*

## **FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN IS GOOD FOR THE ENTIRE PK – GRADE 12 EDUCATION SYSTEM**

An integrated, aligned PK – Grade 12 educational system that includes quality preschool and full-day kindergarten maximizes the return on society's investment in early education. As Nobel laureate economist James Heckman writes, "Investments in early education build on each other and prevent later expensive failures. Remediation of inadequate early investments is difficult and very costly. Early education programs are as vital to the economic infrastructure as highways, housing, and public transportation."

Many Oregon school districts have organized their instructional teams into a Grades K-2 and Grades 3-5 or 3-8 structure to match the benchmark configuration of the Oregon content standards and assessment system. Expanding the structure to include full-day kindergarten will promote the natural alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and program evaluation which will improve results for all students.

A quality, curriculum-aligned early education system is the foundation for improving results across the entire educational system and is critical to raising standards for the Oregon diploma. Full-day kindergarten for all Oregon children will promote success for each young child and will impact the entire educational system as that success is compounded across all grade-levels. A solid foundation for Oregon's school systems will be built through the implementation of full-day kindergarten statewide.

*A quality early education system may carry a large price tag, but it promises even bigger returns. It must be viewed as part of the effort to retool the U.S. education system for a world economy that demands well-educated workers. Spending for a solid education early costs less than paying for remedial and social services later when students crash, drop out of school, or drift into crime and drugs. University of Chicago economists Heckman and Masterov: Early academic gains – and shortcomings – are cumulative. “Skill begets skill; learning begets learning. . .early advantages accumulate, just as early disadvantages do.”*

*Foundation for Child Development, 2005*

## **AN OREGON EXAMPLE: FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN IN THE DAVID DOUGLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT**

During the 2005-2006 school year, David Douglas School District implemented a full-day kindergarten program for all kindergarten students at no additional cost to parents. Full-day kindergarten implementation: all students in half-day (2003-2004); 1/3 in full-day, 2/3 in half-day (2004-2005); all students in full-day (2005-2006).

David Douglas is located in the southeast corner of Portland, Oregon. District-wide, 70% of the students qualified for free/reduced meal assistance, and 25% of the students received English as a Second Language assistance, with over 40 different languages represented. A total of 742 kindergarten students were enrolled in the district's nine elementary schools. Class size averaged 26.5 students. In addition to the certified teacher, an instructional assistant was assigned to each classroom.

Results of full-day kindergarten (short-term):

- Across-the-board improvements in early literacy and academic performance
- Largest gains in achievement for at-risk student
- Increased academic and social readiness for first grade
- Increased instruction time in literacy, math, science, and social studies
- Provided for creative use of instructional time
- Developed close-knit classroom communities
- Accelerated English acquisition

Results of full-day kindergarten (long-term):

- Literacy skill gains achieved in kindergarten will ultimately lead to higher academic performance at all grade levels.

Oregon Department of Education  
OFFICE OF STUDENT LEARNING & PARTNERSHIPS

**Enrollment Trends**

Since 2003-2004, enrollment in full-day kindergarten has increased in Oregon.

**Oregon Full-Day Kindergarten Enrollment**

School Years 2003-2004 Through 2009-2010

**Traditional Five-Day School Week: Number with Full-Day Kindergarten**

Number of Districts							Number of Schools							Number of Classrooms							Number of Kindergarten Students						
2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010
22	28	33	45	72	78	56	87	120	160	191	248	264	244	179	238	362	449	535	569	589	3895	4914	8195	9536	11636	12072	12438

**Non-Traditional School Week: Number with Full-Day Kindergarten**

Number of Districts							Number of Schools							Number of Classrooms							Number of Kindergarten Students						
2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010
42	24	30	37	36	44	39	48	44	36	49	42	52	46	59	66	49	68	73	90	78	730	1174	752	956	1355	1488	1360

**Total Number with Full-Day Kindergarten**

Number of Districts							Number of Schools							Number of Classrooms							Number of Kindergarten Students						
2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2003 2004	2004 2005	2005 2006	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010
4	52	63	82	108	122	95	135	164	196	240	290	316	290	238	304	411	517	608	659	667	4625	6088	8947	10492	12991	13560	13798

## **Best Practices for Providing Full-Day Kindergarten**

Today, children are expected to learn more in kindergarten and the primary years than in previous generations. Child development research shows conclusively that young children are more capable learners than past practices reflected.

“The brain of a kindergarten child has 1,000 trillion synapses, about twice as many as her pediatrician’s.”

Dominic Gullo, *K Today, Teaching and Learning in the Kindergarten Year*, Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2006.

In their book about early brain development, researchers Shonkoff and Phillips state, *Although there have been long-standing debates about how much the early years matter in the large scheme of lifelong development, our conclusion is unequivocal: what happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot, not because this period of development provides an indelible blueprint for well-being, but because it sets either a sturdy or a fragile stage for what follows.*

P. Shonkoff and D.A. Phillips, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000.

### **Qualities of Excellent Kindergartens**

The benefits of full-day kindergarten are best observed in quality programs that provide small and large group instruction in which students are learning in settings that offer both teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. The following qualities of excellent full-day kindergarten programs are substantiated by research-based studies:

- Both teacher-directed and child-initiated activities
- Small-group and large-group instruction
- Individual attention for each child from the teacher, who is trained in early childhood education and its particular instructional strategies, child development, and learning theory
- Instruction and language development in all subjects including reading, writing, math, science, social studies, physical education, music, and art
- Lessons that explore subjects in depth through developmentally-appropriate practices, advanced concept development, and cognition
- Focused support of learning for all children, whatever their earlier experiences, environments, cultures, languages, abilities, or disabilities
- Adherence to state curriculum standards in lesson planning
- Coherent, research-based curriculum delivered through evidence-based instructional practices
- When appropriate, differentiated and individualized instruction, based on data-driven decisions
- Regular and systematic assessment of children’s strengths, needs, and progress with multiple tools that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate
- Class size that maximizes and facilitates high-quality teaching and learning

- Environment that promotes children's enthusiasm, initiative, persistence, and engagement in learning
- Adults who respond to the unique interests, learning styles, and developmental characteristics of five-year olds
- Environment that fosters nurturing relationships and interactions between children, adults, and peers
- Environment of respectful relationships with families to support children's learning and identify comprehensive services needed to promote positive development
- Smooth transitions for kindergarten children and their families between early childhood education settings and full-day kindergarten programs in public school settings

### **Resources**

Significant resources and information on full-day kindergarten, including information on how to implement and fund full-day kindergarten and early childhood education have been compiled by the Oregon Department of Education and are available at the following web-link: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=1464>

The Full-Day Kindergarten Implementation Committee studied research and many resources. Other documents are available on the Oregon Department of Education website at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=2818>

## Conclusion

Oregon educational leaders have observed the powerful results of full-day kindergarten in their schools. They summarize their findings in the following conclusions:

"In my 25 years of professional education experience, full-day kindergarten has been the single most critical initiative that has made a difference in student achievement and the lives of children." - Karen Twain, Tigard-Tualatin School District

"It is a moral imperative that we ensure that each and every five-year-old has the right and privilege of a State supported, full-day kindergarten program that places them on a successful pathway to college and career readiness." - Brenda Lewis, Beaverton School District

"The research and the data provide irrefutable evidence that full-day kindergarten is the most effective change that Oregon can implement to promote long-term academic achievement for children. The Oakridge School District has offered tuition-free full-day kindergarten - that is not funded by state coffers - because we have looked closely at the data. The academic gains are incredible, but there are also positively correlated social and emotional gains resulting from full-day kindergarten as compared to half-time kindergarten.

The theory that increasing student achievement by simply increasing high school diploma requirements is fatally flawed if it stands alone. The only way that you can increase academic outcomes from a graduating senior is to increase the academic achievement in the lower elementary grades and kindergarten. The most effective way that we can improve education in Oregon in the shortest amount of time with the least expenditure of money is with full-day kindergarten. Full-day kindergarten is obviously the best answer to our most pressing question in Oregon public education: What can we do to maximize cognitive, social, and emotional development for our children? The answer is full-day kindergarten.

As I get closer to the end of my professional career there are three things that I am committed to seeing implemented, and funded full-day kindergarten in Oregon is at the top of my list." - Don Kordosky, Oakridge School District

Full-day kindergarten for all Oregon children will promote success for each young child and will impact the entire educational system as that success is compounded across all grade-levels.

# APPENDIX

## Research Summaries

### National-Level Research

The United States Department of Education has funded two national-level studies:

*The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 1998–99* provided the first look into the differences in results between full-day and half-day kindergarten. Results showed that during the kindergarten year, children who were enrolled in full-day programs made greater gains in reading/language arts and mathematics than those children enrolled in half-day classes.

An evaluation of full-day kindergarten was conducted by the Center for Evaluation & Education Policy at Indiana University which released a report in January 2004, *The Effects of Full-Day Versus Half-Day Kindergarten: Review and Analysis of National and Indiana Data*. This 2004 report outlined research-based support for the benefits of full-day kindergarten enrollment. The report specifically indicated that

- Full-day kindergarten enrollment provides the opportunity for greater student academic achievement and social and behavioral development; and
- The full-day kindergarten schedule gives teachers flexibility to devote greater amounts of time to research-based instructional methods.

### District-Level Research in Maryland: Montgomery County School District

In Montgomery County School District in Maryland, extensive research has been conducted over many years where full-day kindergarten has been phased-in since the year 2000. Demographic data show that Montgomery County is one of the largest and most diverse school districts in the nation. Full-day kindergarten has been shown to be an effective intervention in closing the achievement gap — or “opportunity gap” — as they call it in Montgomery County School District. To cite this important, large-scale study:

Results of the reform show that students in kindergarten through third grade are performing at higher levels and, at the same time, the gap between White and Hispanic and African American students is narrowing. The district’s progress is impressive because the gains in achievement are system-wide and are occurring during a period of rapid district growth and increased need for English as a Second Language services.

Montgomery County’s conclusions are based on results of a nationally standardized assessment, coupled with findings from the district’s longitudinal study of 27,000 kindergarten students and a follow-up study of 9,000 more kindergarten students. Their results demonstrate that there are systemic changes that can improve achievement for all students, especially those youngsters caught in the achievement gap.

Montgomery County School District has pinpointed four critical factors in implementing their reform:

- Additional time is critical. Full-day kindergarten combined with smaller classes provides benefits for the most at-risk students.
- The kindergarten program design is important. Well-trained teachers who implement a standards-based curriculum and are guided by diagnostic assessments throughout the year are critical elements of the kindergarten program.
- Continuous time in the same school matters. Students who stay in the same school for kindergarten through Grade 2 perform better, especially if they enter kindergarten with limited foundational literacy skills.
- Experiences before kindergarten are critical. Students who enter kindergarten with strong foundational literacy skills perform better in the early grades, even if they are not continuously enrolled in the same school.

## **District-Level Research in Oregon: David Douglas School District**

David Douglas School District in Multnomah County completed research on the results of the implementation of full-day kindergarten for all kindergarten students. Student performance data for 2005-2006 were compared with 2004-2005 data when 1/3 of the students were enrolled in full-day kindergarten and compared with 2003-2004 data when all students attended only half-day programs.

Findings from David Douglas SD show:

- Across-the-board improvements for all subgroups, not just low-income students, in early literacy and academic performance
- The most significant increase in achievement appeared in the at-risk category.

Stakeholders surveyed in David Douglas SD reported that full-day kindergarten

- Increased students' academic and social readiness for first grade
- Resulted in teaching more literacy, math, science, and social studies
- Allowed more creative use of instructional time
- Resulted in a more close-knit classroom community
- Resulted in accelerated English acquisition for English Language Learners

David Douglas SD concluded: Studies show that performance gaps generally increase, if not addressed early, as students move through the grades. Literacy skill gains achieved in kindergarten will ultimately lead to higher academic performance at all grade levels. (David Douglas SD, 2006)

## **District-Level Research in Oregon: Nyssa School District**

Nyssa School District is located in eastern Oregon on the Oregon and Idaho border, only 50 minutes from Boise, Idaho. Nyssa is an agricultural community dependent on the farming economy.

School Population: Elementary (598 students); Middle School (290 students); High School (340 students)  
65% Latino students  
51% English Language Learner (ELL)  
39% Migrant students  
70% - 80% Free or reduced lunch

Kindergarten Demographics

100 students in kindergarten with average kindergarten class size of 20 students  
67% Latino students  
52% English Language Learner (ELL)  
45% Migrant students

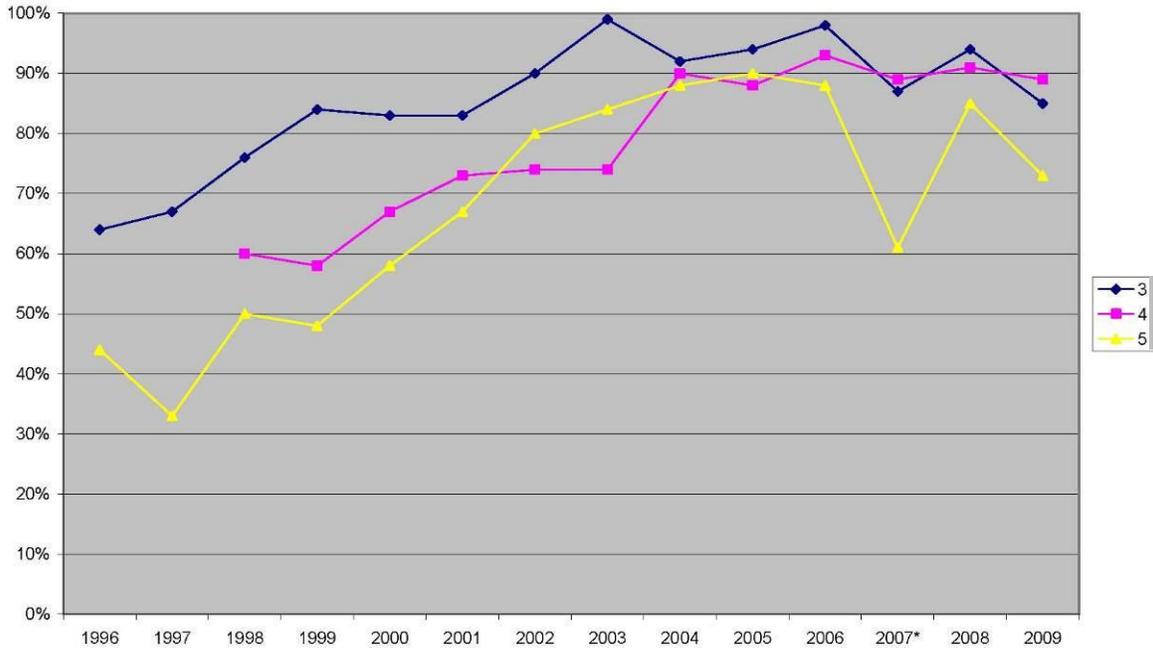
### **Academic Status**

Nyssa School District and its schools have attained AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. Nyssa School District and its schools have received positive Oregon Report Card ratings from 2000 – 2009. Nyssa Elementary School and Nyssa School District have received recognition for closing the achievement gap for children of color and poverty and multiple state and national awards.

### **Data and Assessments Used To Track Students**

Nyssa School District uses many assessments to determine achievement throughout the year: DIBELS; Classroom Work Samples (Grades K-12); Mastery in Motion; Classroom Informal Assessments; Standards of Promotion Tests (Grades K-5); Portfolios (Grades K-12); Accelerated Math and Reading; Alice 9 Phonics program for K-5; Parent PASS System for tracking grades, lessons, attendance data; Data Teams; Professional Learning Community Teams; Special Education Tests.

Nyssa Elementary School: Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Standards  
*Reading*



Nyssa Elementary School: Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Standards  
*Mathematics*



### **Nyssa School District Achievement Strategies**

- Friday Tutorial Classes: The district is on a 4.5 day schedule for students. Every Friday, every teacher in the district is available in the classroom from 12:00 - 1:00 pm to assist students needing additional help. Additional bus runs are available for students electing to stay.
- Peer Mentoring Program: Qualified students provide peer mentoring for kindergarten students.
- Half-Day Friday Staff Development: Due to the district's 4.5 day schedule, staff development is usually scheduled for Friday afternoons. The professional development allows teachers to be more proficient in instruction, subject knowledge, and awareness of students' needs.
- Two-Week Progress Reports: Every two weeks, all students receive progress reports.
- Online PASS Monitoring: Parents are offered a password. This allows parents to access their child's grades, assignments, and attendance throughout the school year.
- Parent Teacher Conference Participation: Student-led conferences are scheduled for first and third quarters. Attendance is required, and all schools have a 98% parent attendance rate. Conferences are held until 9:00 pm, and the district provides transportation, if needed. There is no excuse for the parents' or guardians' non-attendance. Principals will make home visits, if necessary.
- Hiring Caring Teachers, Aides, and Administrators: All staff must focus on personalizing the education of every student they serve.
- Having High Standards for All Students: The district's diverse population requires staff and parents to have high expectations for all students; students have high expectations for all staff.
- Making No Excuses: Nyssa School District students and staff want to be compared with all districts, not just districts with like-demographics. All students have an unlimited capacity for learning.
- Expectations and Requirements: High expectations for students and staff start at kindergarten and are set throughout the educational environment. Increasing student achievement in high school and meeting the new graduation requirements begins as early as possible. The focus on student achievement is maintained intensively throughout the K-12 system.

### **Nyssa School District Transition Strategies: Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten**

Research is clear that smooth transitions between programs and schools are critical for high-levels of achievement. Nyssa School District has established intentional transition strategies. See below for the strategies used for the pre-kindergarten to kindergarten transition.

- Early Intervention and Head Start programs housed in-district
- Summer school for three and four year-olds who are ELL and Migrant Education students
- Full-Day Kindergarten for all students (8:00 am - 3:20 pm)
- Free breakfast and lunch served in classrooms for all students
- Standards of Promotion Assessments for all students
- Primary Assessment Report Card
- English Language Development (ELD) daily classes
- 100% attendance at parent conferences
- Reward trips for meeting kindergarten benchmarks
- Implementation of *Response To Intervention (RTI)*
- Implementation of *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)*
- Half- Day Friday School Tutorial
- After-School Tutorial
- Elementary teachers are with students during recess time
- Implementation of *Step Up To Writing Program*
- Implementation of *Cornell Note-Taking Strategies (Writing)*
- Friday afternoon staff development
- Looping teachers: students are assigned to the same teacher for two consecutive years
- Individualized English Language Learner (ELL) plans and Individualized Education Programs (IEP)
- Kid Assistance Program: Selected students receive tutoring in kindergarten
- No excuses for staff — All students succeed

### Nyssa Full Day Kindergarten Schedule

- 8:00 – 8:20 Morning singing
- 8:20 – 9:00 English Language Development (ELD)
- 9:00 – 9:35 PE/Music with Specialist
- 9:35 – 11:25 Reading Block
- 11:30 – 12:10 Lunch and Recess
- 12:10 – 12:25 Story time
- 12:25 – 1:00 Interpersonal and Social Skill Time
- 1:00 – 1:25 Sharing and clean-up time
- 1:25 – 1:45 Recess
- 1:45 – 2:30 Math, Calendar, Concept Board
- 2:30 – 3:15 Writing Instruction and Theme Time
- 3:15 – 3:25 Closure and Departure Time

### Nyssa Survey Results: Teachers Highlighted Benefits of Full-Day Kindergarten

- Teachers and students are able to delve deeper into concepts.
- Less rushing through the day and curriculum; more time to enjoy children, instruction, and curriculum.
- Allows more time to work on individual skills.
- Allows teachers to know children better.
- Allows teachers the time to be thorough about assessment and instruction.
- Allows teachers to prepare more thoroughly due to smaller class sizes.

### District-Level Research in Oregon: Oakridge School District

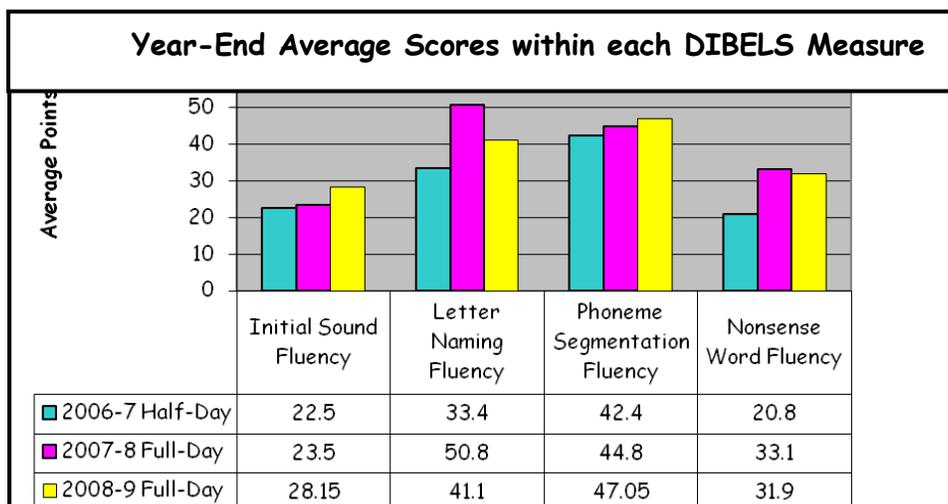
Oakridge School District is located sixty miles east of Eugene and is nestled in the foothills of the western Cascade Mountains. The area is surrounded by the Willamette National Forest.

**Full-Day Kindergarten:** Do the gains suggest that providing full-day kindergarten is worth the money? All measures point to Yes!

- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
- Teacher Interview
- Parent Survey
- Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) and the district-developed Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)

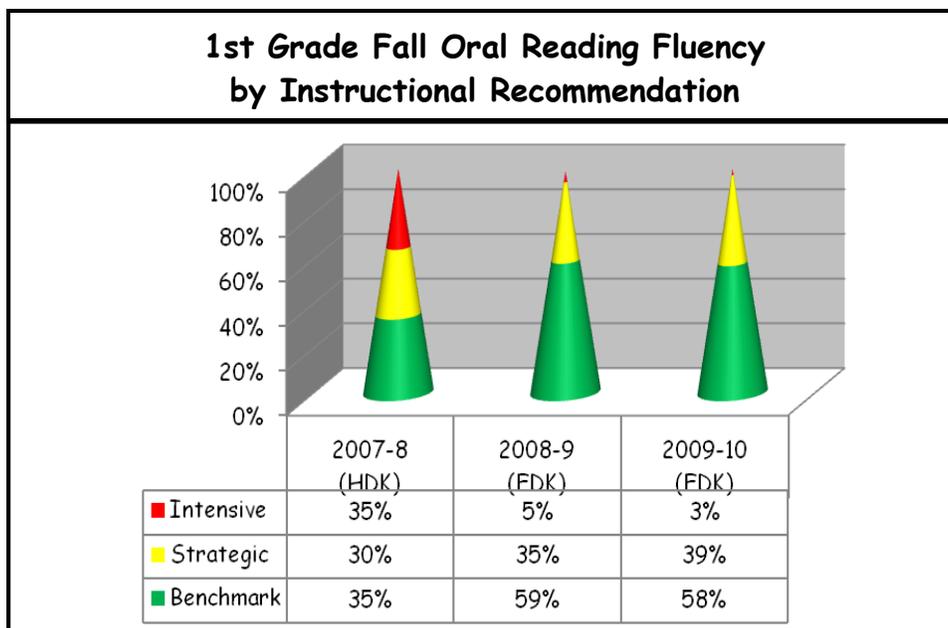
**DIBELS Results:** See the bar graph below.

- Results show that children who attended full-day kindergarten scored higher in every measure.
- Large improvements in letter-naming fluency and nonsense word fluency are also shown below.



**Oral Reading Fluency Results:** See the bar graph below.

- The need for intensive intervention in first grade decreased by 32% for students who attended full-day kindergarten the year before.
- Results show a 23% gain in the number of first grade students meeting benchmark after attending full-day kindergarten.



**Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) Results**

- Initially, gains were greater in full-day kindergarten;
- Then, many children began achieving 100% on the assessment.
- Due to this ceiling effect, overall gains were about the same; students were hitting the “ceiling” of the current test starting in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. The “ceiling effect” showed that the majority of scores were at or near the maximum possible (100%) for the assessment, and there was little or no room for additional gains because the highest test score possible had already been achieved.

**Teacher Interview Results**

Full-day kindergarten allows for more instruction:

- Math – more in-depth instruction and more concepts taught
- Reading – more enrichment; no longer frustrating students due to unrealistic expectations in pace
- Writing – expanded from teaching only letters and familiar words to complete sentences
- Free exploration time (centers), a real learning motivator for students – more time for these activities
- Additional curriculum – more time for spelling, science, and social studies

“Full-day kindergarten creates a more caring environment, and makes for happier students and teachers.”

**Parent Survey Results**

Of those parents who participated in the survey, 100% agreed that full-day kindergarten allowed their child to improve reading and math skills more than in half-day kindergarten.

"It helps children hold information; they learn and enjoy school better."

"We had one child in full-day this year and one in half-day last year. They really learn twice the amount in full-day. Big, big difference in the two kids. I love full-day kindergarten!"

## District-Level Research in Oregon: Tigard Tualatin School District

Tigard-Tualatin School District is located in the suburban Portland area. On the chart below, students in Grades K - 3 had the advantage of full-day kindergarten.

**Tigard-Tualatin School District  
Metzger Elementary School  
Percentage of Students at 50th Percentile or Greater  
on the Math Curriculum Based Measures (CBM)**

