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SB 152

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Superintendent

National studies and research from other states show it is time for Montana students to take advantage of Full-Time Kindergarten.

Sixty-three percent (63%) of Kindergarten students nationwide are enrolled in Full-Time Kindergarten programs. Yet only about 28% of Montana students can take advantage of a Full-Time Kindergarten program.

Currently, Montana funds Kindergarten at half the cost of students in grades 1-6, regardless if the student is enrolled in half-time or full-time.

Full-Time Kindergarten is not a new program. It is an enhancement of an existing program.

Academic Benefits of Full-Time Kindergarten

1. Higher test scores and greater progress in literacy, math, and general learning skills[1]
2. Fewer behavior problems, grade retentions and special education placements[2,7]
3. Significant gains in social and emotional development[2,7]
4. Levels the playing field for disadvantaged kids who enter school already behind[3]
5. An effort to close the achievement gap[4] and lower the dropout rate[9]
6. Long term studies show reduced use of correctional and social services, higher adult literacy rates, and higher level of schooling completed[9]
7. NO detrimental effects to attending Full-Time Kindergarten[5,7]
8. Significantly stronger academic gains over the course of the kindergarten year than their half-day counterparts[6,1]
9. Poor and minority students especially can benefit from participation in full-time programs. (Positive outcomes appear to be larger for disadvantaged students)[5,7]
10. Positive effect on both short and long term student achievement[7]
11. Students adjust to longer days in school without any major difficulties[7]
12. Significantly higher reports of homework completed at age 15[9]
13. Students exhibit more independent learning, classroom involvement and productivity in work with peers[8]
14. Prepares students for successful transition to first grade[1]
15. Of importance for low-income children, the longer school day provides increased opportunities for good nutrition
16. Financial benefits include: reduce school transportation costs from reduce busing of half-day kindergarten students and cost savings from few student retentions[2,7]

Economic Benefits of Full-Time Kindergarten

- Significantly higher level of schooling completed[9]
    - 71% of those with early childhood education opportunities completing high school or higher v. 54% of those without access to early childhood education
- Significantly higher monthly earnings at age 27[9]
    - 29% of those with early childhood education opportunities earning $2000 or more per month v. 7% of those without access to early childhood education
- Significantly higher percentages of home ownership:[9]
    - 36% of those with early childhood education opportunities owning a home v. 13% of those with access to early childhood education
- Significantly lower percentage receiving social services[9]
    - 59% of those with early childhood education receiving services at some time in the previous 10 years v. 80% of those without access to early childhood education
- Significantly fewer arrests by age 27[9]
    - 7% of those with early childhood education opportunities having five arrests or more v. 35% of those with out access to early childhood education. 7% of those with early childhood opportunities having arrests for crimes of drug making or dealing with 25% of those without early childhood opportunities

Parental Control

- Full-Time Kindergarten is pro-family
    - Enrollment of students in Full-Time Kindergarten will be voluntary. We know the best judge of a child's school readiness is their parents. Parents will decide if their child is ready for full-time, half-time, or no kindergarten at all.

- Supports working families
    - More children live in dual-income or single parent families and are transported between school, day care and home throughout the day. All of those transitions are stressful both for children and their parents and can detract from the learning – academic and behavioral – that is taking place.

Local control

- Local school boards will have the option to provide Full-Time Kindergarten based on a districts' budget, facilities, and staff, and would be responsible for implementing it in a way that most benefits their students and their school system.

Funding for Full-Time Kindergarten

- Authorize the state to give schools that choose to provide Full-Time Kindergarten full payment for each child enrolled instead of the half payment they currently receive. The cost is estimated at $26 million for the 2009 biennium.
- Provide $10 million in one-time only startup costs. Some school districts may have difficulty providing Full-Time Kindergarten initially because of staff, budget, or facility limitations. Currently, schools may be running two half time programs using the same educator and the same room. Adding Full-Time Kindergarten would require an additional FTE and an additional classroom, these financial obstacles may be more that the additional ANB funding would cover. The startup costs would help districts overcome the financial barrier.

Full-Time Kindergarten

Full-Time Kindergarten isn't about politics or partisanship. It's about 145,416 Montana students. It's about the 10,000 kindergarten students enrolled this year, 10,000 next year, 10,000 the year after, and so on. It's all about your children, your grandchildren, and the kids next door. And it is about their future and Montana's future.

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[1] Elicker, J., and Mathur, S. (1997). What Do They Do All Day? Comprehensive Evaluation of a Full-Day Kindergarten. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 12:* 459–480.
[2] Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. ERIC Digest. June 2001. http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/eecearchive/digests/2001/clark01.pdf
[3] Warrick, Sandra. A three Year study of the Effectiveness of Full-Day Kindergarten at Lowell Elementary School, October 1993; as cited in Think New Mexico, Increasing Student Achievement in New Mexico: The Need for Universal Access to Full-day Kindergarten, Santa Fe, NM: Author, Fall 1999.
[4] Early Success: Closing the Opportunity Gap for Our Youngest Learners (Montgomery County [Maryland] Public Schools, July 2004, http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/superintendent/docs/early_success.pdf)
[5] Education Commission of the States. The Progress of Education Reform 2004. Vol. 5, No. 4, Sept 2004. Full-day Kindergarten Programs Improve chances of Academic Success.
[6] Lee, Valerie E.,Burkam, David T., Honigman, Joann & Meisels, Smauel. Full-Day vs. Half-day Kindergarten; Which Children Learn More in Which Program. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Anaheim, CA, 2001. Revised Jan 29, 2002.
[7] The effects of Full-day Versus Half-day Kindergarten: Review and Analysis of National and Indiana Data. (Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, January 2004, http://www.doe.state.in.us/primetime/pdf/fulldaykreport.pdf)
[8] Cryan, John, and others. June 1992. "Successful Outcomes of Full-Day Kindergarten: More Positive Behavior and Increased Achievement in the Years After." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 7 (2): 187-203. EJ 450 525.
[9] Research on Early childhood Education. Northwest Regional Labs, School Improvement Research Series 1989. http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/topsyn3.html