

Full-day Kindergarten

Findings from a longitudinal study in Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District showed:

- Dramatic gains in kindergarten essentially eliminated the achievement gap among all students.
- Students from full-day cohort entered and exited both 1st and 2nd grades ahead of the national average on standardized tests.
- At-risk students from full-day kindergarten outperformed at-risk peers who only attended half-day kindergarten at every measurement comparison in 1st and 2nd grades.
- Students from full-day cohort continue to record above average performance into 3rd grade.

Details about these findings are on the reverse side. The full text of the report will be available by March 28, 2007, on the CAREI website (education.umn.edu/CAREI/).

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Main points from Burnsville-Eagan-Savage (District 191) Kindergarten Study

Findings about the cohort of students who are now in Third Grade who attended District 191 Full-Day Kindergarten during the 2003-04 school year (called the “Universal Full-Day Cohort”):

- Made growth in all academic areas in kindergarten, closing gaps between racial, language (ELL/English) and socioeconomic (free or reduced lunch status) groups.
- As a group, the universal full-day kindergarten cohort entered and exited both 1st and 2nd grades ahead of the national average. They continued to record above average performance into 3rd grade. Gains during first grade were statistically significant.
- While 3rd grade Gates scores for Fall 2006 dipped somewhat from 2nd grade Spring 2006 results (from 61.68 to 55.61), the group average Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in Fall 2006 for 3rd grade were at or above 60 for both reading and math.
- Statistically significant differences in scores of at-risk and not at-risk students (based upon free or reduced lunch, racial group, and ELL status) were found at nearly every point in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade.
- 1st grade teachers reported higher achievement and better behavior in this group than in previous classes.
- By 2nd grade, teachers continued to report a noticeable positive difference in the academic preparedness of this group, with little difference in social or emotional readiness. Most teachers in the district reported changing their use of curriculum materials to present a faster paced and more advanced level of work for students who came to 2nd grade with above average skills.

Academic Achievement Findings for Full-Day vs. Half-Day Kindergarten

- Full-day cohorts scored significantly higher than half-day students did in 1st and 2nd grade.
 - This is true of whole-group comparisons as well as for every sub-group examined (FRL, ELL, Minority)
 - Universal full-day cohort scores were significantly higher than the fee-based full-day cohort (04-05 kindergarten class) at the beginning of 2nd grade.

Findings for Students Considered to be At-Risk

- All risk groups (FRL, ELL, minority) performed better in 1st and 2nd grade when they had attended full-day rather than half-day kindergarten.
- During the 04-05 school year, far more students received FRL, had a home language other than English, and were racial minorities had attended the free half-day kindergarten program rather than fee-based full-day program.
- Teachers reported concern that the difference in program enrollment (full-day versus half-day) increased the gap in opportunity between “haves” and “have-nots” and was ultimately related to differences in academic performance.