



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS IN CONNECTICUT

By: Marybeth Sullivan, Legislative Analyst II

You asked several questions about kindergarten programs in Connecticut, which we answer individually.

1. *Is there any Connecticut or national data on whether full-day kindergarten has a positive academic impact on children as they enter first grade, and in particular on English Language Learners (ELLs)?*

Over the past decade, multiple studies have examined the impact of full-day kindergarten enrollment on academic achievement in subsequent grades. The majority note that research results are mixed: some studies find that full-day programs yield benefits in first grade and as far as middle school, while others find benefits to be short-lived or confined only to the kindergarten year. The following publications explore these topics:

- Indiana University Bloomington's Center for Evaluation & Education Policy: [*Short-Lived Gains or Enduring Benefits? The Long-Term Impact of Full-Day Kindergarten*](#) (2005)
- National Institute for Early Education Research: [*Making the Most of Kindergarten: Present Trends and Future Issues in the Provision of Full-Day Programs*](#) (2005)

- WestEd: [*Full-Day Kindergarten: Expanding Learning Opportunities*](#) (2005)
- Educational Resource Information Center: [*Recent Research on All-Day Kindergarten*](#) (2009)
- Hanover Research: [*Full-Day Kindergarten and Academic Achievement*](#) (2010)

Additionally, *Education Week* spotlighted a study published in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* that addresses the academic impact of full-day kindergarten on ELLs.

- Education Week: [*Full-Day Kindergarten Reduces Early Retention for ELLs*](#) (2011)

2. What are the academic standards for kindergarten in Connecticut, and how will they be affected by the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS)? Would full-day kindergarten align with or enhance CCSS requirements?

As of the publication of this report, 45 states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories have adopted the CCSS. The Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the CCSS on July 7, 2010, and Connecticut public school districts have already begun implementing them. The standards are not a curriculum or test questions, but rather descriptive lists, organized by grade and subject matter, of specific skill areas and subject matter content that teachers must help their students master. Currently, English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics are the only subject areas the standards address.

Kindergarten CCSS ELA standards are organized according to the following categories: [Reading: Literature](#); [Reading: Informational Text](#); [Reading: Foundational Skills](#); [Writing](#); [Speaking & Listening](#); and [Language](#). Kindergarten CCSS mathematics standards are organized according to the following categories: [Counting & Cardinality](#); [Operations & Algebraic Thinking](#); [Number & Operations in Base Ten](#); [Measurement & Data](#); and [Geometry](#).

SDE has published a draft document on its website that discusses the transition from Connecticut standards to CCSS kindergarten standards in mathematics: [*Mathematics Connecticut Preschool Standards to Common Core State Standards Continuum: Preschool – Kindergarten*](#). However, no similar public document is available for ELA standards. OLR

asked SDE for a kindergarten ELA document, as well as an update on the draft status of the mathematics document. We will make the department’s answer available when we receive it.

3. Which Connecticut school districts provide full-day kindergarten and which do not? Of those that do not, how many are among the lowest performing districts in the state?

According to SDE’s preliminary October 1, 2012 student census [data](#), every public school district in Connecticut offered full-, extended-, or half-day kindergarten, or some combination of the three during the 2012-13 school year. The difference between these three types of programs is explained below. Also, several Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) operate magnet schools that offer kindergarten programs, and several charter schools also offer them. Regional public school districts offer kindergarten programs either through the regional system or by individual member towns in the district.

A full-day kindergarten program provides 900 hours of actual schoolwork for a minimum of 180 days. It is provided to all children (95%-100% enrollment) by 103 school districts, seven charter schools, and 11 magnet schools. Table 1 lists these schools and districts.

Table 1: Schools and Districts Providing Full-Day Kindergarten to All Children

<i>Districts</i>				
Andover	Eastford	Manchester	Plymouth	Westbrook
Ashford	East Granby	Mansfield	Preston	West Hartford
Bethany	East Haddam	Meriden	Putnam	Weston
Bethel	East Hartford	Middletown	Ridgefield	Wethersfield
Bloomfield	East Haven	Milford	Salem	Willington
Bozrah	Easton	Naugatuck	Salisbury	Winchester
Branford	East Windsor	New Britain	Scotland	Windham
Bridgeport	Essex	New Canaan	Seymour	Windsor
Brookfield	Franklin	New Fairfield	Sharon	Windsor Locks
Canaan	Glastonbury	New Haven	Sherman	Wolcott
Chaplin	Granby	Newington	Simsbury	Woodbridge
Chester	Greenwich	New London	Sprague	Woodstock
Clinton	Groton	New Milford	Stamford	Regional District 6
Colebrook	Hamden	Norfolk	Sterling	Regional District 10
Columbia	Hampton	North Branford	Thomaston	Regional District 12
Cornwall	Hartford	North Canaan	Thompson	Regional District 13
Coventry	Hebron	North Haven	Trumbull	Regional District 14

Table 1 (continued)

Districts				
Cromwell	Kent	North Stonington	Union	Regional District 17
Darien	Lebanon	Norwalk	Voluntown	Regional District 18
Deep River	Lisbon	Old Saybrook	Waterbury	
Derby	Litchfield	Plainville	Waterford	
Charter Schools				
Achievement First Bridgeport (Bridgeport)				
Achievement First Hartford Academy (Hartford)				
Amistad Academy District (New Haven)				
Elm City College Preparatory School (New Haven)				
Highville Charter School District (Hamden)				
Integrated Day Charter School (Norwich)				
Side By Side Community School (Norwalk)				
Magnet Schools*				
Discovery Academy (Hartford)				
Glastonbury-East Hartford Magnet School (East Hartford)				
International Magnet School for Global Citizenship (East Hartford)				
Montessori Magnet School (Hartford)				
Museum Academy (Hartford)				
Reggio Magnet School of the Arts (Avon)				
Regional Multicultural Magnet School (New London)				
Six-to-Six Magnet School (Bridgeport)				
The Friendship School (Waterford)				
University of Hartford Magnet School (West Hartford)				
Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School (Hamden)				

**This listing includes magnet schools operated by Regional Education Service Centers. District-operated magnet schools are included within the district listings.*

An extended-day kindergarten program is longer than a half-day program and shorter than a full-day: it provides more than 450 hours but less than 900 hours of actual schoolwork for a minimum of 180 days. It is provided to all children (95%-100% enrollment) by 9 districts and 1 charter school. Table 2 lists these schools and districts.

Table 2: Schools and Districts Providing Extended Day Kindergarten to All Children

<i>Districts</i>
Ellington
Hartland
Norwich
Orange
Redding
Somers
Tolland
Westport
Wilton
<i>Charter Schools</i>
New Beginnings Family Academy

Half-day kindergarten programs provide 450 hours of actual school work for a minimum of 180 days. It is provided to all children (95%-100% enrollment) by 36 school districts, listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Districts Offering Half-Day Kindergarten to All Children

<i>Providing to All Children</i>		
Ansonia	Griswold (97%)	Pomfret (97%)
Avon	Guilford (98%)	Portland
Barkhamstead	Killingly	Rocky Hill
Berlin	Ledyard	Shelton
Bolton	Madison	Southington (95%)
Bristol	Marlborough (99%)	South Windsor
Brooklyn	Monroe	Stafford
Canterbury	Montville (99%)	Wallingford
Cheshire	New Hartford	Watertown (96%)
East Lyme (97%)	Newtown (95%)	West Haven
Enfield (95%)	Oxford (91%)	Regional District 15 (100%)
Farmington	Plainfield	Regional District 16 (100%)

Additionally, several districts offer a mix of kindergarten programs, using two or all three models. Table 4 lists these districts, along with their enrollment percentages for each program model offered.

Table 4: Districts Offering a Mix of Kindergarten Programs

Districts			
	Full-Day Enrollment	Extended-Day Enrollment	Half-Day Enrollment
Canton		52%	48%
Colchester	25%		75%
Danbury	68%		32%
East Hampton	14%		86%
Enfield	5%		95%
Fairfield		12%	88%
Glastonbury	93%	6%	1%
Griswold	3%		97%
Guilford	2%		98%
Marlborough	1%		99%
Meriden	13%		87%
Montville	1%		99%
Newtown		5%	95%
Norwich	(unclear whether 85% full day or 85% extended day)		
Oxford		9%	91%
Pomfret	3%		97%
Southington	4%	1%	95%
Stonington	8%	8%	85%
Stratford	88%		12%
Suffield	8%		92%
Tolland	6%	94%	
Torrington	7%		91%
Vernon	2%	43%	56%
Watertown	4%		96%
Wethersfield	2%		98%
Charter Schools			
	Full-Day Enrollment	Extended-Day Enrollment	Half-Day Enrollment
Jumoke Academy District	83%	28%	

SDE categorizes school districts according to their performance by using District Reference Groups (DRGs). DRGs are nine school district groupings, from letters A through I, organized according to student achievement and various socio-economic factors. DRG “I” contains the seven lowest performing school districts in the state (Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury, and Windham). All of these school districts have full-day kindergarten programs.

4. Please provide a legislative history of previous full-day kindergarten proposals in the General Assembly.

Since 1995, 22 bills containing full-day kindergarten proposals have been introduced in the General Assembly. Table 5 summarizes the bills' proposals and outcomes.

Table 5: Bills Containing Full-Day Kindergarten Proposals

Bill	Proposal	Outcome
1995		
Proposed Bill 5242	Require all Connecticut public school districts to offer full-day kindergarten by 1998	Referred to Education Committee; no action
Proposed Bills 5569 and 6139	Establish an early childhood school readiness program that includes state financial assistance for expanded opportunities for extended and full-day kindergarten programs that serve neediest children first	Referred to Education Committee; no action
Proposed Bill 5580	Establish an early childhood school readiness program that provides state financial incentive for expanded opportunities for extended and full-day kindergarten programs, serving the neediest children first	Referred to Education Committee; no action
1998		
Proposed Bill 5089	Increase priority school district grants by \$1,437,220 to provide a grant to Waterbury Board of Education for all-day kindergarten for 27 classes	Referred to Education Committee; no action
sHB 5657	Establish early reading success grants to help priority districts and schools establish full-day kindergarten programs Add an additional 10% state reimbursement for construction projects related to establishing all-day kindergarten programs in priority districts and schools	Public Act 98-243 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amended bill to reduce additional state construction reimbursement to 5%
Proposed Bill 121	Phase-in full-day kindergarten programs	Referred to Education Committee; no action
2000		
sSB 155	Appropriate \$500,000 to the State Department of Education (SDE) for grants to priority school districts for additional full-day kindergarten programs	JFS by Education Committee to Appropriations Committee; Appropriations took no action
2001		
sHB 6876	Increase the school construction bonus, from 5% to 10%, for any part of an elementary school building project in a priority district or school to be used primarily for a full-day kindergarten program Require priority districts seeking funding for full-day kindergarten programs under the early reading success grant program to include in their plans information on how the kindergarten and school readiness programs will be coordinated to provide information on a child's transition from preschool to kindergarten	JFS by Education and Appropriations Committees JF by Finance, Human Services, Public Safety and Legislative Management Committees House took no action

Table 5 (continued)

Bill	Proposal	Outcome
HB 7502	<p>Double the bonus to priority school districts (from 5 to 10%) for constructing facilities for full-day kindergarten programs</p> <p>Require priority districts seeking funding for full-day kindergarten programs under the early reading success grant program to include in their plans information on how the kindergarten and school readiness programs will be coordinated to provide information on a child's transition from preschool to kindergarten</p>	<p>Bill emergency certified by leadership</p> <p>Public Act 01-1</p>
2002		
Proposed Bill 5332	Empower the State Bond Commission to authorize bonds of up to \$2 million to be used by SDE for additional space for full-day kindergarten and head start programs at Broadview School in Danbury	Referred to Education Committee; no action
2005		
HB 1068	Allow the education commissioner to provide grants for children in the Hartford statewide interdistrict public school attendance program to participate in an all-day kindergarten program	JFS by Education Committee to Appropriations Committee, striking all language to require higher education institution's athletic departments to develop a policy about using automatic external defibrillators during athletic activities
HB 1347	Have the education commissioner establish a competitive grant program to assist priority school districts and districts that fail to make adequate yearly program to transition to full-day kindergarten programs	Referred to Education Committee and given a public hearing; no action
Proposed Bill 367	Phase-in over five years a universal, state-funded early childhood education program with a focus on pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten	Referred to Education Committee; no action
2006		
Proposed Bill 5339	Fund priority school districts for the provision of full-day kindergarten for all five-year-old children who are not currently enrolled	Referred to Education Committee; no action
sSB 376	Require the education commissioner of give \$250,000 in grants to priority school district boards of education that are establishing full-day kindergarten programs for the 2006-07 school year	<p>JFS by Education Committee</p> <p>Referred to Appropriations Committee; no action</p>
2007		
Proposed Bill 6524	Provide universal full-day kindergarten	Referred to Education Committee; no action
Proposed Bill 357	Provide a universal, state-funded early childhood education program with a focus on pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten, to be phased in over five years	Referred to Education Committee; no action
HB 8003, § 32 June Special Session	Allow the education commissioner to require a school district to provide full-day kindergarten classes as a consequence of failing to make adequate yearly progress after two successive years	<p>Bill emergency certified by leadership</p> <p>Public Act 07-3, June Special Session</p>

Table 5 (continued)

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
2011		
sHB 6385, § 20	<p>Define “Crandall school program” as a program offered at a public school that has a specialized curriculum or theme, such as full-day kindergarten, that is designed to promote participation in the open choice program</p> <p>Require SDE to establish a Crandall school program, within available appropriations, available to any board of education that helps the state meet the goals of the <i>Sheff</i> settlement</p> <p>Allow the education commissioner to provide grants for children in a Crandall School program offered by the Hartford district to participate in full-day kindergarten programs, which includes before- and after-school care and remedial services</p>	JFS by Education Committee to Appropriations Committee. Appropriations took no action.
HB 6432, § 8	Require priority school districts to provide full-day kindergarten to all children who reside in the district by July 1, 2013	Referred to Education Committee and given a public hearing; no action
HB 6502	<p>Define “Crandall school program” as a program offered at a public school that has a specialized curriculum or theme, such as full-day kindergarten, that is designed to promote participation in the open choice program</p> <p>Require SDE to establish a Crandall school program, within available appropriations, available to any board of education that helps the state meet the goals of the <i>Sheff</i> settlement</p> <p>Allow the education commissioner to provide grants for children in a Crandall School program offered by the Hartford district to participate in full-day kindergarten programs, which includes before- and after-school care and remedial services</p>	Referred to Education Committee and given a public hearing; no action
2013		
Proposed Bill 655	Create incentives for boards of education to establish full-day kindergarten	Referred to Education Committee; no action

5. What would it cost Connecticut to require full-day kindergarten?

The Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) posed this question to the State Department of Education (SDE). We will make the department’s answer available when we receive it.

6. PA 12-116, § 96 required SDE and the governor's Early Care and Education Cabinet to develop an information sharing system between preschool/school readiness programs and kindergarten regarding children's oral language and pre-literacy proficiency. What is the status of this system?

According to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), SDE has decided that this system is not a stand-alone piece and instead will address it in multiple ways, including through a grade K-3 reading plan, a K-3 professional development plan, and a revised Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA).

A consortium of seven states (Connecticut, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, and Ohio) and three partner organizations (WestEd, the Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education, and UConn's Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Program) is currently developing a new KEA and aligned assessments for children aged three to six years. This multi-staged assessment is given at age three years, six years, and at kindergarten entry. It will provide information on each child's learning and development across school readiness domains, and it aims to produce reliable scores for individual children and groups or subgroups that can be used to (1) evaluate school readiness, (2) guide individualized instruction, and (3) better understand the effectiveness and professional development needs of teachers, principals, and early-learning providers.

By the 2016-17 school year, the consortium will develop an assessment system that includes a KEA that could be a component of a state student assessment system and a comprehensive early learning system. The assessment system could also provide data for incorporation into a state longitudinal data system.

7. What best practices for planning, data collection, and sharing does Connecticut use to transition students between early care and kindergarten?

According to OEC, there are currently no system-wide mechanisms to capture transition data. However, the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) project, launched by OEC and SDE on November 20, 2013, aims to bring together data about children aged birth to five years that is currently housed in different data systems across agencies. Once fully developed, ECIS is expected to capture critical data that will be used by communities and local and regional school districts. This project is funded by \$6 million in bonding.

Additionally, there is an effort underway by 53 Discovery Communities to collect transition data. Discovery Communities is a program funded in part by the Graustein Memorial Fund to bring together early childhood stakeholders to improve early childhood care and education by building capacity. These communities conduct community needs assessments, collect data, employ results-based accountability for specific indicators, develop the early childhood blueprint plan, and implement action steps to improve outcomes for young children. Pre-kindergarten transition to kindergarten is often part of these communities' Discovery Birth-8 Plans.

Also, Connecticut currently has a kindergarten assessment that identifies a student's developmental level through a basic checklist. It is not clear how this assessment is currently used, but some districts may be using it to help identify needs of kindergarten students.

8. Are kindergarten teachers trained to communicate with early care providers and with first grade teachers as part of the pre-k through grade three early learning continuum?

According to SDE, at the district level, if kindergarten teachers communicate with early childhood providers, it is typically through a questionnaire the parents receive. The parent gives it to the early childhood provider to complete, and then the parent returns it to the school. Currently, this is done at the district level, not statewide.

SDE describes transition planning between kindergarten teachers and grade one teachers as much more consistent statewide because staff tends to be under the same roof. The same is true between grades one and two, as well as two and three. Most districts have data teams of teachers who look at incoming students in June or late August and examine student data from year to year. There are no mandated practices, however. This is a local decision made by district leaders.

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