Kindergarten Programming Study

A Summary of the Kindergarten Programming Task Force

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The Work of the Task Force

- Read research surrounding full day and half day kindergarten
- Observed full day kindergarten classrooms in Stockbridge, Charlotte, and East Lansing
- Interviewed school personnel in the buildings that we observed
- Surveyed the DeWitt community
What does the research say?

- Children enrolled in all-day kindergarten show greater academic and behavioral success.
- Differences in academic success had diminished by third grade.
- All-day kindergarten teachers utilized small-group instruction and provided for small-group activities more frequently than half-day teachers.
What does the research say?

- Full-day kindergartners exhibited more independent learning, classroom involvement and were also more likely to approach the teacher than half-day kindergartners.
- The full-day kindergarten schedule gives teachers flexibility to devote greater amounts of time to research-based instructional methods.
- Full-day kindergarten programs resulted in increased performance on standardized tests, reduced grade retention, and reduced special education referrals.
What did we see in full-day classroom observations?

- Few behavior problems were observed
- Children's writing skills are more advanced
- Students were relaxed and the pace of instruction was appropriate
- Students were independent in much of their work
- Thematic units were evident
What did we see in full-day classroom observations?

- The schedule was setup for the morning to be academic heavy and the afternoon to be more play-based
- Full-day programs included the research-based 90 minute literacy block
- More small group instruction happened
- Teachers knew the kids very well
What did we learn from personnel interviews?

- There was a rest time at the beginning of the year, but it was phased out as many students were not benefiting from the rest time.
- Teachers preferred full-day programming for curriculum pacing, assessment management, and management of resources.
- Teachers had more time to extend learning and differentiate. They were not teaching different material than half-day programs.
What did we learn from personnel interviews?

- Inclusion of Special Ed. students was positive in full-day classrooms.
- More parents requested full day option as time went on.
- There was the same need for early intervention support in full day programs as in half day programs.
Half-Day Programs

**Advantages**
- Eases children into school
- FECC is designed for kindergarten (resources, classrooms, etc.), but is limited in capacity

**Disadvantages**
- 90 minute literacy block is not implemented
- Takes longer to get to know students and parents
- Not much time to extend learning or implement additional educational programs
Full-Day Programs

Advantages
- More time to use best practices in teaching material
- More time for students to practice what they are learning
- Early intervention—students receive instruction from certified teacher

Disadvantages
- Not all children may be developmentally ready for a full day
- Research shows there is an “even”ing out at 3rd grade
- Parents have child for 3 less hours per day
## Full-Day Programs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tr>
<td>• More time for small group Writing and/or Math (important for intervention strategies)</td>
<td>• Added expectations at a young age</td>
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<td>• More time to teach children social skills (how to play, how to interact with others, etc.)</td>
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Parent Survey

- 154 people responded
- 55% prefer full day kindergarten, 45% prefer half-day kindergarten
- 141 people wrote comments
Currently, Michigan offers a disincentive for districts to provide full day kindergarten (there is no difference between the funding amount for half- and full-day kindergarten programs).

With the proposed Bill, Michigan would offer an incentive for full day kindergarten.

For regular kindergarten programs, the state would offer full funding to districts where students attend 60% of the day or more in 2010-2011.
Things we learned about a successful transition

- Community needs to be educated on full-day program
- The building needs to be setup to meet developmentally-appropriate educational needs of the children
- Research-based instruction, assessment, and interventions need to be taking place in the program
- Value needs to be placed on teaching to the whole child
Things we learned about a successful transition

- It is important to gather input from the community
- High-quality instruction matters
- Impact on 1st and 2nd grade
- Intentional planning for resources, lunch, scheduling, etc.
- Phasing the program in helps to build support
The DeWitt Board of Education has approved a pilot of two sections of full-day kindergarten during the 2009-2010 school year. The effectiveness of the program will be evaluated throughout the year.
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