EAB

Full-Day Pre-K Programs

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1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Offer full-day pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs to provide important services for economically disadvantaged students and their families. At profiled districts, 90-100 percent of children enrolled in district-operated, full-day pre-K programs qualify for free, half-day pre-K programs under state income qualifications or federal Title I designations. The additional hours of full-day programs allow teachers to provide enrichment (e.g., music and art), services (e.g., meals), and supplemental instruction (e.g., SEL and literacy) to students. Research shows that at-risk students benefit from these interventions. Further, contacts and research suggest that full-day pre-K programs provide a valuable childcare service for economically disadvantaged families. This service may explain the research-documented impacts of high-quality early childhood education on children's lives, which include lower crime rates, higher degrees of educational attainment, and better health outcomes.

Research on the long-term academic achievement of full-day pre-K students is inconclusive; nonetheless, research recommends investments in the quality of full-day pre-K programs to facilitate benefits to students beyond elementary school. Research and profiled districts suggest that the academic benefits of full-day pre-K programs include improvements in literacy, vocabulary, social-emotional learning, stamina, and numeracy. Yet data from **District B** suggests that students in full-day pre-K programs do not always perform better than students in half-day pre-K programs. Further, some research displays that early childhood education programs provide only a temporary improvement in academic achievement, and at-risk students do not retain the benefits of full-day pre-K throughout elementary school. However, research suggests that investments in curricula, instructional ratio, and teacher professional development, in addition to increased instructional time, increase the likelihood that academic benefits persist throughout students' academic careers.

Invest district funds to cover the difference between state and/or federal funding and the cost of full-day programs. At **District C** and **District E**, families that do not qualify for free pre-K programs pay tuition to enroll their children. However, most enrolled families qualify for free enrollment. Therefore, tuition does not significantly offset the cost of pre-K programs. **District B** does not receive state funding for pre-K programs, so the district partners with Head Start to offer free pre-K programs. These programs receive federal grant money for both half-day and full-day pre-K programs. All other profiled districts receive state funding and invest general operating funds from the district budget to operate full-day pre-K programs.

To incur fewer costs during a transition to full-day pre-K programs, mitigate the need for additional instructional staff through strategic classroom consolidation and community partnerships. Contacts at profiled districts report that full-day pre-K programs require more instructional staff than half-day pre-K programs. To hire fewer additional instructional staff, contacts at **District B** and **District E** report that administrators consolidate under-enrolled classrooms to transition half-day classes to full-day classes. Further, administrators at **District A**, District B, **District C**, and **District F** partner with Head Start to increase the number of opportunities for parents to enroll children in free or affordable pre-K programs.

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2) Motivations

Student Outcomes

Despite Mixed Academic Results, Offer Full-day Pre-K to Build Students' Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Skills

Studies conducted in 2014 and 2018 examine the impact of half-day versus full-day pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs on low-income, ethnic minority students. These studies find that children who attend full-day pre-K programs exhibit greater cognitive, literacy, math, vocabular, socio-emotional, and physical development (e.g., motor skills) in kindergarten than children who attend half-day pre-K programs.[1] Contacts at **District E** add that implementation of full-day pre-K increases literacy levels. Contacts note that the percentage of students reading behind grade level in kindergarten, first, and second grade decreased each year after the district transitioned all pre-K programs to a full-day model. Further, one study suggests that children who attend full-day pre-K programs continue to perform better than children who attend half-day pre-K programs on academic standards during assessments in the spring of their first-grade year.[2]

However, analyses of academic assessments at some profiled districts (i.e., **District B**, **District F**) suggest that enrollment in a full-day program does not result in a statistically significant increase on assessment scores compared to enrollment in a half-day program. Contacts at District F express dissatisfaction with the metrics that measure kindergarten readiness on assessments, which may not capture the full extent of the benefits of full-day pre-K. For example, these metrics do not measure familiarity with school routines, love of learning, or financial impact on students' families.

1) Allison Atteberry, Daphna Bassok, and Vivian C. Wong, "The Effects of Full-day Pre-kindergarten: Experimental Evidence of Impacts on Children's School Readiness," *University of Virginia*, (July 2018). https://curry.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/epw/64_Effects_Full_Day_Prekindergarten.pdf; AJ Reynolds, et al., "Association of a full-day vs. part-day preschool intervention with school readiness, attendance, and parent involvement," *JAMA*, no. 20 (November 2014): 2126-34. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25423219.
2) Kenneth B. Robin, Ellen C. Frede, and W. Steven Barnett, "Is More Better? The Effects of Full-Day vs. Half-Day Preschool on Early School Achievement," *National Institute for Early Education Research*, (May 2006). https://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Is_More_Better_NIEER.pdf.

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Impact of Full-Day Pre-K on Kindergarten Readiness

Vocabulary Foundation	Research and contacts at **District C** report that full-day pre-K students spend more time in language-rich environments and increase their vocabularies.[3]
Social-Emotional Development	Research and contacts at **District B** and **District D** report that students in full-day pre-K programs receive additional social-emotional learning (SEL) lessons, which helps them develop social-emotional skills.[4]
Familiarity with School	Contacts at **District A** report that full-day pre-K programs more closely mimic the structure, routines, and expectations of kindergarten than half-day pre-K programs. Students build stamina necessary to complete the full day of school and learn what to expect at school. Contacts report that time at school increases students' excitement about learning and attending school.
Foundation in Core Subjects	Research and contacts at **District A** and **District E** report that children in full-day pre-K programs develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills. These foundation skills help students achieve proficiency in academics in kindergarten.[5]

Full-Day Pre-K Programs Provide Free Childcare for Economically Disadvantaged Families, Which Increases Equity and May Produce Life-Long Benefits for Students

Contacts at **District C** and **District E** cite equity as a motivation to operate full-day pre-k program. Research that evaluates the impact of full-day kindergarten as compared to half-day kindergarten may apply to pre-K students. This research suggests full-day kindergarten closes achievement gaps between low-income students and their more advantaged peers.[6] However, the academic skills improvements that low-income students experience as a result of full-day kindergarten can diminish or disappear in later elementary school. For example, though students from full-day pre-K programs demonstrate greater vocabularies in kindergarten than their peers, research finds that this foundational skill does not manifest as improved reading comprehension in later years.[7]

3) Robert C. Pianta and Catherine Wolcott, "Pre-Kindergarten for the Modern Age," *Raise Your Hand Texas*, (November 2014). https://www.raiseyourhandtexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/PreK_ResearchReport.pdf.
4) Reynolds, et al., 2126-34.
5) Atteberry, Bassok, and Wong.
6) CJ Libassi, "Best Research Yet on the Effects of Full-Day Kindergarten," *New America*, (December 2014). https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/fullday-k-research/.
7) Guanglei Hong and Bing Yu, "Early-grade Retention and Children's Reading and Math Learning in Elementary Years," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* vol. 29, no. 4 (December 2007): 239-261. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0162373707309073.

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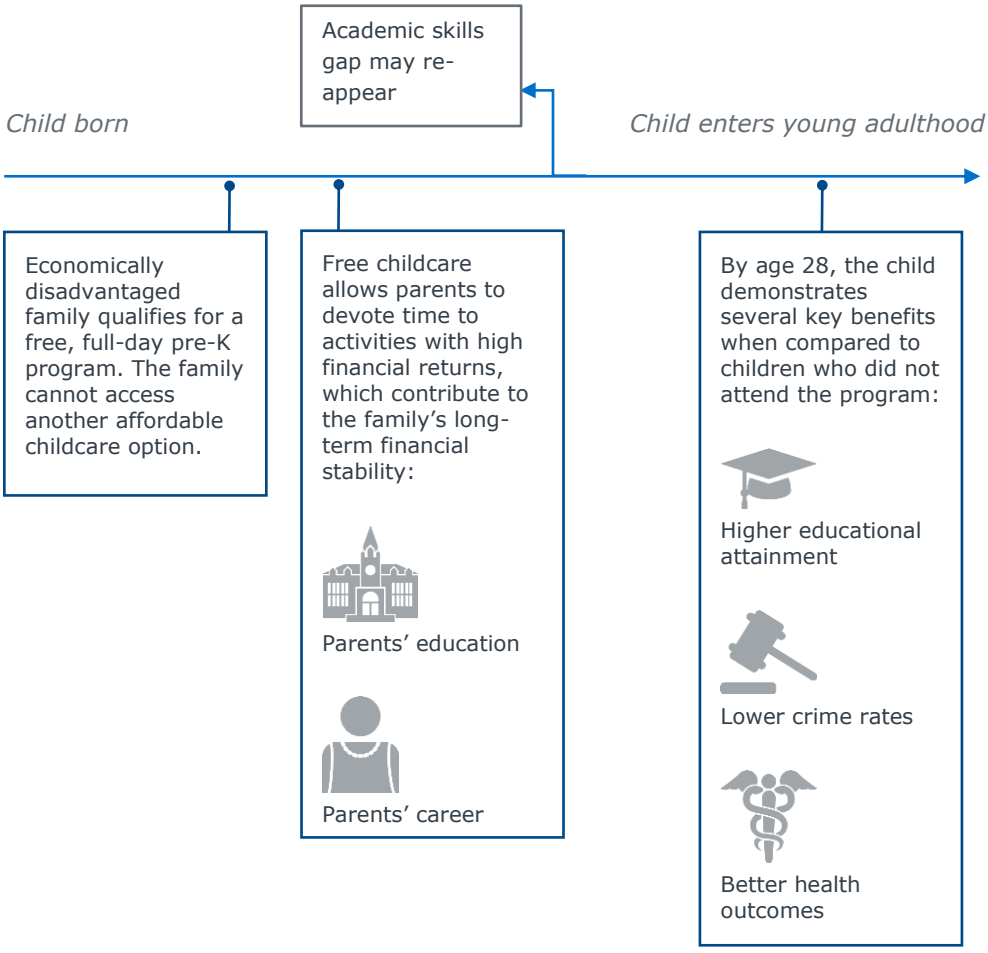
While this research suggests that full-day pre-k does not facilitate long-term academic benefits for students, contacts at **District A**, **District B**, District C, District E, and **District F** emphasize that full-day pre-k programs benefit economically disadvantaged families. Full-day pre-K programs save families money that they would otherwise need to spend on childcare. Further, they allow parents with young children to continue to work full days. Thus, contacts at District C note that full-day pre-k contributes to greater economic equity in the community.

Case Study Demonstrates Some Long-Term Benefits of Full-Day Pre-K Programs[8]

A 2015 case study suggests economically disadvantaged families benefit from full-day pre-K as a childcare provider. The case study considers a full-day pre-K program that provides robust wraparound services (e.g., community outreach, professional development for teachers, developmentally appropriate curriculum).



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8) Kesley Piper, "Early Childhood Education Yields Big Benefits – Just Not the Ones You Think," *Vox*, October 16, 2018. Accessed April 2019. https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/16/17928164/early-childhood-education-doesnt-teach-kids-fund-it; "Small Investment in Children's Education Yields Big Results," *Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development*, March 11, 2015, https://www.nichd.nih.gov/newsroom/releases/031115-podcast-reynolds.
9) Ajary Chaudry et al., "Child Care Choice of Low-Income Working Families," *Urban Institute*, (January 2011): 121. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/27331/412343-Child-Care-Choices-of-Low-Income-Working-Families.PDF.

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Align Programs with Quality Markers to Improve Outcomes for Economically Disadvantaged Students

Contacts at profiled districts and research suggest that children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds demonstrate the greatest need for the enrichment and services that pre-K programs provide.[10] **Raise Your Hand Texas**, a public education advocacy organization, reports that the quality of pre-K programs impacts the return on investment from these programs.

Criteria for High-quality Pre-K Programs[11]

Developmentally Appropriate Curricula

To ensure students leave pre-K ready for kindergarten, effective programs select a U.S. Department of Education-approved curricula from the **What Works Clearinghouse**'s list.

Low Student-to-Teacher Ratio

Administrators enroll no more than 10 students for each teacher, and fewer whenever staffing allows.

Professional Development for Teachers

Administrators observe teachers regularly. Teachers receive coaching and resources.

6-6.5 Hours of Instructional Time per Day

Full-day programs provide six or more hours of instruction per day, while half-day programs provide only three hours of instructional time per day.

Data-driven decision making

Teachers and administrators monitor student outcomes, identify gaps or deficiencies, and design interventions.

10) Deborah A. Phillips, et al., "The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten," *Brookings Institute*, (April 2017). https://www.brookings.edu/research/puzzling-it-out-the-current-state-of-scientific-knowledge-on-pre-kindergarten-effects/.
11) Pianta and Wolcott.

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3) Program Operation

Funding

Use Multiple Funding Sources to Cover the Difference Between State and Federal Funding and the Cost of Full-Day Pre-K Programs

All profiled districts cite funding as a challenge for full-day pre-K programs. At profiled districts, administrators combine sources such as state funding, federal Title I funds, federal grants, and tuition revenue alongside district funds to cover the cost of full-day pre-K programs. Most profiled districts invest district funds from the general operating budget to cover some of the cost of full-day pre-K programs.

For example, at **District E**, 1,000 students attend state-funded pre-K programs for economically disadvantaged students. State funding covers the cost of half-day pre-K programs for these students. The district invests an additional 1.5 million dollars from the general operating budget to provide full-day pre-K for these students.

Offer a Tuition-Based Option to Increase Access to Pre-K Programs

Fees collected from families that pay tuition do not significantly offset the costs of the program.

At **District C** and **District E**, families that do not qualify for state-funded pre-K programs enroll their children in district-operated, full-day pre-K programs on a tuition basis. Contacts at these districts note that under 10 percent of families who enroll their children in pre-K pay tuition. The remaining students who attend pre-K programs at these two profiled districts qualify for state- or federally-provided pre-K. Contacts report that administrators offer the tuition option to provide families who cannot afford private pre-K access to high-quality affordable pre-K for their children. 100 percent of the students at other profiled districts qualify for state- or federally-provided pre-K programs.

Federal and State Regulations Dictate Public Pre-K Programs' Tuition Models

In the United States, federal pre-K programs (i.e., Head Start) do not charge families tuition if their income falls below the federal poverty level. If local programs do not reach capacity from qualifying families, non-qualifying families can enroll their children for a fee. Some programs use sliding scale tuition models, in which parents who do not qualify for free enrollment pay a fee based on their income.[12] For all district-operated pre-K programs, state regulations determine program tuition.

12) "Early Childhood Education Sliding Fee Tuition Scale," *Lawrence County Early Childhood Academy*, (August 2017). http://www.headstartworks.org/id42.html.

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State Profile Example: Texas Public Pre-K Program Tuition Regulations

Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidelines discuss the **legality of charging tuition for public pre-K programs**.

Additional TEA guidelines explain **allowable situations for districts to charge tuition for public pre-K programs**.

Districts must submit a TEA form with proposed tuition levels for approval each year. Administrators download the form from the site linked above.

Pre-K programs at **District C** and **District E** cost the same amount for families who do not qualify for free enrollment. At District C, families pay by the day. At District E, families pay by the year. Contacts explain that the daily tuition model provides families with flexibility, while the yearly tuition model encourages consistent attendance at pre-K programs. No profiled districts ask parents who qualify for state-funded pre-K programs to pay tuition to enroll their children in full-day pre-K programs.

Full-day Pre-K Program Tuition Models for Families That Do Not Qualify for Free Enrollment

$45/day	$4,455/year
District C	**District E**

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Monitor Pending Legislation to Determine Funding Sources Needed for Full-Day Pre-K

Many states provide funding for half-day pre-K programs that serve qualifying students. Some states (e.g., Maryland) fund half- and full-day pre-K programs for qualifying students. In other states, legislators are considering increasing funds for pre-K programs. In November 2018, three members of the Texas House of Representatives introduced a **bill** to fund full-day pre-K for students that currently qualify for public, half-day pre-K. As of April 2019, the Texas House Committee on Public Education is considering the bill.[13] If the bill passes, districts throughout Texas can offer a full-day pre-K option to qualifying students at no cost to the district. Contacts at **District A** report that administrators monitor the bill. If the bill passes, contacts suggest that the district will no longer need to divert funds from the general operating budget to operate their pre-K program.

Staffing

Consolidate Under-Utilized Capacity in Half-Day Classes to Create Full-Day Classes Without Doubling Staff

All profiled districts cite staffing as the primary cost of full-day pre-K programs. While half-day pre-K instructors teach two consecutive classes every day, full-day pre-K instructors teach one class per day. Therefore, profiled districts that transition half-day programs to full-day programs must hire additional instructors to meet the staffing needs of full-day classes. At **District B**, **District E**, and **District D**, administrators identify and fill under-utilized capacity to mitigate the number of additional staff they hire.

Profiled districts require a ratio of no more than ten children to one teacher in pre-K classrooms. Contacts at District B suggest that districts ensure at least three instructors staff each full-day class, even if twenty or fewer students enroll. Contacts cite the challenges of naps, feeding, and toileting over the course of the day as the rationale for this recommendation.

13) H.B. 189, Sess. of 2019 (TX. 2018). https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/HB189/2019.

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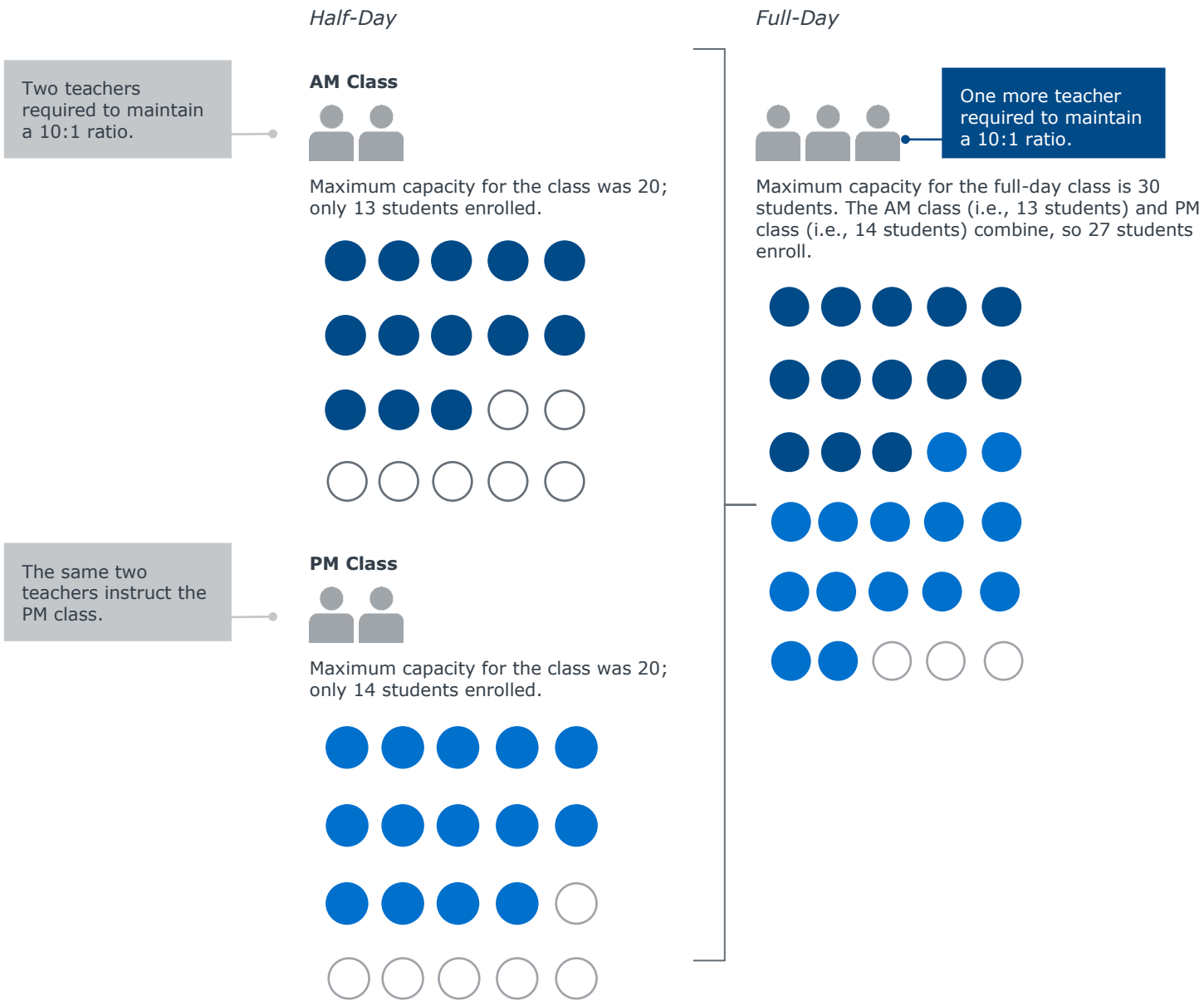
Sample Half- to Full-Day Pre-K Staffing Transition at Profiled Districts

In a half-day pre-K model, the same two instructors teach one group of students in the morning and another group of students in the afternoon. To transition to a full-day model, administrators combine both classes of students and add one teacher.



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Implement Full-Day Pre-K to Facilitate Classroom Observations and Teacher Retention and Recruitment

Beyond the initial investment in additional staff and ongoing financial oversight that increased staffing levels require, contacts at most profiled districts report that administrators do not need to devote more attention to full-day pre-K programs than to half-day pre-K programs. Further, contacts at District B and District D report that administrators more easily operate full-day pre-K programs because they provide two benefits related to staff management.

Staff Management Benefits of Full-Day Programs at Profiled Districts

Classroom Observations
Contacts at **District D** report that administrators more easily schedule time to observe and support individual students and teacher-class interactions when students stay with the class and teacher for a full day.

Teacher Recruitment
Contacts at **District B** report that candidates express more interest in full-day pre-K positions because they offer a more secure schedule and benefits eligibility.

Enrollment

National and Statewide Trends Indicate that Most Pre-K Students Attend Full-Day Programs, and Full-Day Program Enrollment Demonstrates the Most Growth

In 2017, more than four and a half million children attended public pre-K programs in the United States, or 38.5 percent of the overall population of three- through five-year-old children in the United States at that time.[14] In Texas, for example, approximately 29 percent (i.e., 231,485 students) of the overall population of three- through four-year old children enrolled in public pre-K programs during the 2017-2018 school year.[15] Nationally and in Texas, the majority of these children attend full-day pre-K programs.

14) "Digest of Education Statistics" *National Center for Education Statistics*, (2018): Table 202.10. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_202.10.asp.
15) "Texas Public Prekindergarten Programs and Enrollment Ages 3 and 4 – Statewide," *Texas Education Agency*, accessed April 2019. https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early_Childhood_Education/Texas_Prekindergarten_Data/; "Kids Count Data Center," *The Annie E. Casey Foundation*, (2019). https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/3074-public-pre-kindergarten-enrollment-3-4-year-olds#detailed/2/any/false/1558,1484,1457,1228,1070,1022,892,784,685,684/any/8035,8034.

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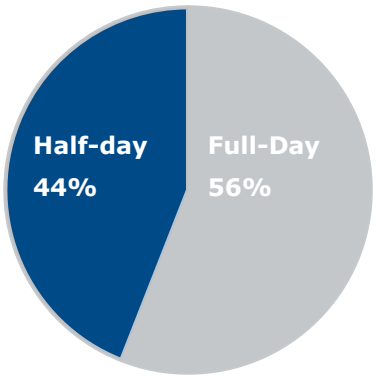
Public Pre-K Enrollment Statistics

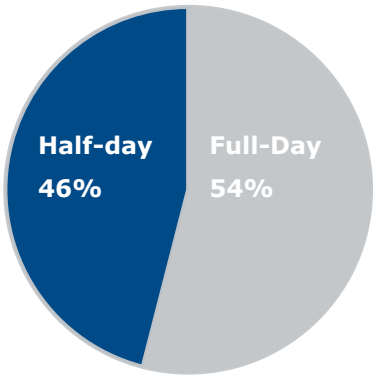
National Enrollment Compared to Texas Enrollment by Public Program Type

In Texas, enrollment data reflects national trends; most students attend full-day programs. Pre-K enrollment is increasing in Texas, and full-day programs account for the growth. Half-day pre-K enrollment decreased by one percent from the 2016-2017 school year to the 2017-2018 school year, while full-day enrollment increased by seven percent during the same time period.[18]

United States (2017)[21]

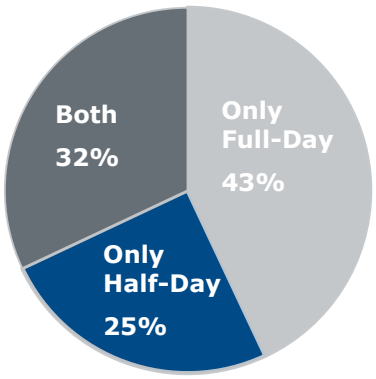


Texas (2017)[22]



Program Types at Texas Districts Offering Pre-K[19]

Districts in the Texas with public pre-K programs offer either half-day pre-K programs, full-day pre-K programs, or both programs. During the 2017-2018 school year, most districts (i.e., 75 percent) operated a full-day pre-K program as either the sole pre-K program option or one of two pre-K program options.



16) "Digest of Education Statistics" *National Center for Education Statistics*, (2018): Table 202.10. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_202.10.asp.
17) "Texas Prekindergarten Data," *Texas Education Agency*, accessed April 2019: 2017-2018 state report. https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early_Childhood_Education/Texas_Prekindergarten_Data/.
18) "Texas Prekindergarten Data," *Texas Education Agency*, accessed April 2019: 2016-2017 state report, 2017-2018 state report. https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early_Childhood_Education/Texas_Prekindergarten_Data/.
19) Ibid.

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Further, at profiled districts with multiple pre-K options, most students attend full-day pre-K. At **District B**, Head Start operates all full-day pre-k programs. The size of the program at this district reflects that families must qualify for the program based on the federal poverty level.

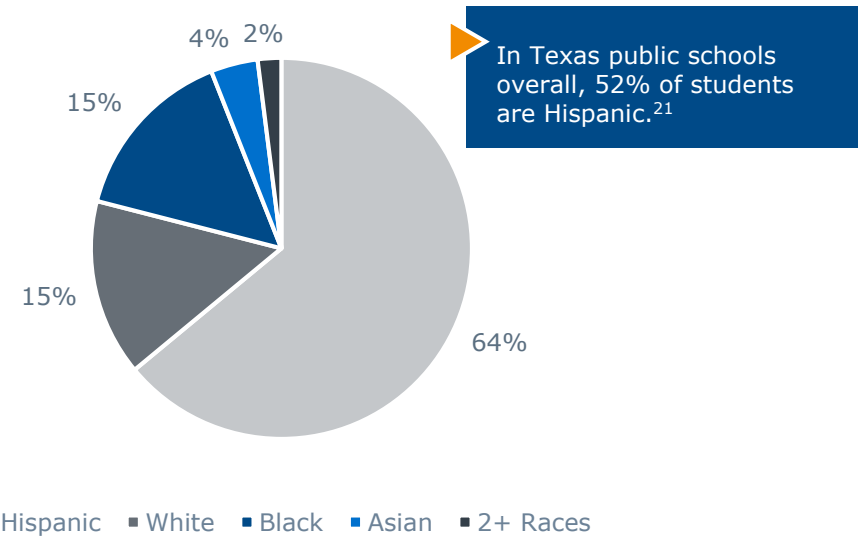
Pre-K Enrollment at Profiled Districts

District	Half-Day Pre-K	Full-Day Pre-K
District A	3 pilot classes for three-year-old children	9,000 children
District B	Unknown	401 children
District C	350 children	1200 children
District D	500 children	600 children
District E	No part-time classes	1,000 children
District F	600 children	1,400 children

Full-Day Pre-K Programs Primarily Serve Economically Disadvantaged and Hispanic Students

Most pre-K students at profiled districts qualify for public pre-K programs due to economic disadvantage. Contacts report that district families whose incomes do not qualify them for public pre-K programs seek other arrangements for childcare or pre-K, which at some districts includes paying for district-operated pre-K. In Texas, state statistics show that Hispanic students disproportionately represent in pre-K program enrollments.

Racial Composition of Public Pre-K Programs in Texas (2017-2018)[20]



20) Ibid.
21) "Enrollment in Texas Public Schools 2017-2018," *Texas Education Agency*, (August 2018): 4. https://tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/School_Performance/Accountability_Research/Enrollment_Trends/?LangType=1033.

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To Increase Pre-K Enrollment, Offer a Half-Day Pre-K Program Option in Addition to Full-Day Pre-K Programs

Research shows that attendance at pre-K, regardless of length of the program, provides academic and social benefits for economically disadvantaged students through the rest of their academic careers and into their adult lives.[22] Contacts at **District C** report that offering multiple pre-K options (i.e., full-day and half-day) increases the likelihood that economically disadvantaged or otherwise at-risk students enroll in pre-K. Contacts add that parents of at-risk children demonstrate a spectrum of needs, and the availability of both full- and half-day programs appeal to different families for different reasons. For example, contacts at **District E** report that attendance and enrollment increased when the district transitioned from half-day to full-day pre-K, because full-day pre-K provides parents with uninterrupted childcare.

Family Rationale for Selecting Pre-K Programs at Profiled Districts

Half-Day

Time with family members

Some families place significant cultural value on grandparent-provided childcare.

Emotional distress

Full-day pre-K can overwhelm young children, which causes behavioral episodes and distress for parents and children.

Full-Day

Childcare

Free childcare for the entire day saves families money, especially if they work or take classes during the day.

Kindergarten readiness

Full-day pre-K helps students learn the skills and routines they use in kindergarten.

Advertise New Pre-K Programs to Parents of Current Elementary School Students to Increase Enrollment

Administrators advertised the program via a flyer on the district website and at each elementary school site.

Though **District A** has offered full-day pre-K for four-year-old children for more than one decade, contacts report that administrators recently piloted a half-day pre-K program for three-year-old children. Administrators advertised the new pre-K programs to parents of current elementary students. Contacts report that this audience disseminates information about new programs among parents with additional, younger children. Contacts report that these marketing efforts increase enrollment in pre-K programs and ensure more children receive the benefits of early childhood education.

22) Robert Slaby, Sharon Loucks, and Patricia Stelwagon, "Why is Preschool Essential in Closing the Achievement Gap?" *Educational Leadership and Administration*, vol. 17 (2005): 47. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ795076.pdf.

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Solicit Parent Input to Gauge Interest in Full-Day Pre-K Programs

At **District A** and **District B**, administrators collected parent input when they considered expanding pre-K programs. At District A, administrators surveyed parents of current elementary school students to determine pre-K preferences. The district's communication office designed the survey. Contacts report that parents indicated overwhelming support for more opportunities to enroll their children in childcare (i.e., full-day pre-K or pre-K for younger students).

In addition, contacts at **District F** report that parents with other elementary school children prefer full-day pre-K programs because they pick-up and drop-off all their children at the same time every day. Contacts report that locating pre-K classrooms at elementary school sites whenever space allows contributes to this benefit to parents.

Leverage Community Organizations to Increase Capacity to Provide Affordable Pre-K Programs

Staffing costs present the greatest funding challenge of full-day pre-K programs. Contacts report that administrators partner with community organizations to meet some of the demand for affordable pre-K programs. These organizations provide additional opportunities for families within district boundaries to enroll their children in pre-K programs at no cost to the district. For example, Head Start programs at **District A**, **District B**, **District C**, and **District F** increase the number of opportunities for parents to enroll children in free or affordable pre-K programs. At **District D** and **District E**, the district provides instructional support and special education expertise to Head Start classes to standardize the experience of pre-K children throughout the district.

Provide Competitive Compensation to Fill Instructional Positions for Full-Day Classes

Contacts at **District A** report that administrators struggle to recruit enough bilingual instructors to staff full-day pre-K classrooms, which contain many Hispanic students. To overcome this challenge, administrators offer a bonus to teachers with Spanish-language proficiency. Further, administrators partner with universities in Spain to recruit recent graduates. Contacts at **District C** also report that the district offers competitive compensation and benefits packages to recruit high-quality instructors to staff pre-K programs.

Consider Offering Transportation and Extended Childcare Services to Increase Pre-K Access

Contacts at profiled districts cite transportation and extended day opportunities (i.e., childcare until the workday ends) as methods to increase access to pre-K programs. Contacts at **District C** note that full-day pre-K families especially appreciate these services, because transportation and extended day opportunities allow families to rely on pre-K programs for childcare that spans the duration of the workday. However, contacts add that these components require significant resources (e.g., planning, staff, funding).

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Additional Service Options for Full Day Pre-K Programs at Profiled Districts

Problem	Optional Service
Attendance Contacts at **District A** report that pre-K attendance rates are 2-3 percent below district-wide attendance rates. Contacts at **District F** report that lack of district-provided transportation for pre-K students affects attendance.	**Transportation** **District A** offers free transportation for pre-K students. **Challenges** Contacts report that transportation for pre-K students creates additional costs for the district.
Childcare Contacts report that parents cannot always find childcare for their children between the end of the school day and the end of the workday.	**Extended Day Programs** **District C** offers extended day programs specifically for pre-K students. Students can stay at pre-K until 5:30pm at no additional cost to families. **Challenges** Contacts report that administrators struggle to staff these programs.

Consider Locating Pre-K on Elementary School Sites to Share Services

Contacts at **District D** and **District F** report that pre-K students can attend district-operated extended day programs because pre-K instruction occurs at elementary school sites, which offer extended day services for elementary school students. At District F, parents pay for extended day programs on a sliding scale based on household income.

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4) Curriculum

Instruction

Devote Additional Time in Full-Day Programs to Enrichment and Services

Guidelines recommend that high-quality pre-K programs operate for 6-6.5 hours, five days per week, 180 days per year.[23] The length of full-day pre-K programs' days provide opportunities for high-quality experiences and basic services that half-day programs cannot offer.

Non-Instructional Components of Full-Day Pre-K Programs

Enrichment Opportunities

Contacts at **District C** report that half-day and full-day pre-K students receive the same instructional lessons each day. In the afternoon, full-day students receive supplemental, enrichment lessons (e.g., project-based learning, art projects, music, etc.) that build on the topics covered in the morning.

Basic Needs Services

Students in full-day pre-K programs receive two meals per day and naptime. Contacts at **District B** note that the extended time in a secure, well-resourced environment supports economically disadvantaged children.

Devote Time for Naps to Mitigate Behavioral Problems among Three-Year-Old Students

The two profiled school districts with only full-day pre-K programs (i.e., **District E** and **District A**) and **District F** enroll only four-year-old students in full-day pre-K. However, families at the three other profiled districts (i.e., **District B**, **District C**, and **District D**) can enroll three-year-old students in full-day pre-K. Contacts at District B and District C report that three-year-old students tire throughout the day and exhibit disruptive behavior. To mitigate disruptive behavior, instructors at District C dedicate time for students to nap during the afternoon.

23) Pianta and Wolcott.

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Select Curriculum that Aligns with District Motivations for Implementing Full-Day Pre-K

At profiled districts, administrators determine curricula teachers use in pre-K classrooms. Administrators select curriculum that align with motivations for pre-K programs.

Motivations for Selecting Curricula at Profiled Districts

Contacts at **District D** report that students exhibited disruptive behaviors when previous curricula incorporated strict expectations, instead of play-based learning.

Motivation	District	Curriculum
Encourage Play	**District B**	**The Creative Curriculum**: This curriculum promotes exploration and discovery to develop social-emotional and cognitive skills.
	District D	**Beyond Centers and Circle Time**: This curriculum supports skill development and playtime.
Standardize Instruction	**District C**	**Big Day**: This curriculum encourages development in core academic areas (i.e., literacy, math, science, and art) through three experiences each day.
Improve Literacy	**District A**	**Frog Street**: This curriculum targets multiple areas of early childhood development and provides materials in Spanish and English.
	District E	**Opening the World of Learning**: This curriculum encourages teachers to guide students through reflective learning and provides materials in Spanish and English.
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	**District F**	**Frog Street**: In addition to the components mentioned above, this curriculum integrates social-emotional lessons.

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Supplement Curriculum Assessments with District-Designed and Vendor-Provided Assessments to Evaluate Full-Day Pre-K Programs

Instructors at all profiled districts administer curricula-provided assessments to pre-K students. For example, curricula include exercises to give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of topics such as counting, and materials for teachers to record students' level of proficiency. Further, all profiled districts require instructors to administer additional assessments to gather data on progress toward state standards, literacy, and kindergarten readiness.

Types of Pre-K Assessments at Profiled Districts

Data Tracking

Administrators at **District E** monitor district-wide literacy rates. They track the percentage of students behind grade level in kindergarten, first, and second grade to evaluate pre-K effectiveness.

External Vendor Products

Administrators at **District A** purchased **CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System**, which allows teachers to assess specific skills (e.g., book and print awareness).

District-designed Assessments

Administrators at **District E** designed a literacy monitoring program. Instructors administer the assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of each year.

State-mandated Assessments

Administrators at **District C**, **District D**, and **District F** use state-mandated assessments to measure skills development and kindergarten readiness.

Consider Comparing Assessment Scores from Full-Day and Half-Day Programs to Measure the Effectiveness of Full-Day Pre-K

District B and **District F** collect the same data from assessments of half-day and full-day pre-K children, which allows administrators to determine how student performance differs based on the length of the day. At District B, the district's internal research department conducted the first analysis, which administrators corroborated with additional analyses by a professor at a local university and an independent research firm. The district used Head Start funds to cover the cost of technical assistance for these analyses. Contacts at both districts report that analyses of assessment scores do not reveal a statistically significant difference between half-day and full-day programs. For information on the benefits of full-day programs, see **pages 5-7** of this report.

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5) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member district approached the Forum with the following questions:

- In the United States overall and in Texas specifically, what percentage of children attend full-day versus half-day pre-K programs? How does enrollment in programs differ by demographic groups?
- In the United States overall and in Texas specifically, what are the tuition pricing models for district-operated pre-K programs? What are pricing trends in pre-K programs' tuition?
- What are the benefits and disadvantages of full-day pre-K programs?
- What ages and demographics of children attend full-day pre-K programs at contact districts?
- How do contact districts fund full-day pre-K programs? If tuition-based, what is the annual tuition for the full-day program?
- Do state-funded tuition assistance programs cover the full cost of full-day programs for qualifying families?
- How many students enroll in full-day pre-K programs at contact districts? If contact districts operate tuition-based programs, what percentage of students qualify for state-funded tuition?
- What are the main components of full-day pre-K curricula at contact districts?
- Why did contact districts decide to implement full-day pre-K programs?
- What challenges did contact districts encounter when implementing full-day pre-K programs? How did districts respond to these challenges?
- How do contact districts optimize staffing, facilities, and other logistics for full-day pre-K programs?
- How do contact districts meet the staffing needs of full-day pre-K programs?
- How do contact districts assess full-day pre-K programs?
- What benefits and disadvantages of full-day pre-K programs do contacts cite?

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Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed pre-K administrators who operate full-day pre-K programs at the following districts:

A Guide to Districts Profiled in this Brief

District	Location	Enrollment Range
District A	Texas	50,000-99,9999
District B	Utah	50,000-99,9999
District C	California	50,000-99,9999
District D	Florida	25,00-49,999
District E	Texas	10,000-24,999
District F	Florida	150,000+

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