

Full-Day Kindergarten White Paper

National Outcomes:

- [Numerous research studies](#) on full-day kindergarten, starting in the 1980s, have shown multiple benefits for students who attended full-day kindergarten versus half day kindergarten.
- In 2021, thirty-eight states provided full-day kindergarten as an option for 100% of kindergarten students. In comparison, Utah has the lowest FDK rate offering (34%).

State Outcomes:

- KEEP and Acadience Reading data show increased outcomes for students who attend full-day kindergarten versus half-day or extended-day. Prior to COVID-19 learning disruptions, student outcomes were 4 times greater for students who attended full-day kindergarten. Even with COVID-19 disruptions, the outcomes remain 2 times greater.

Local LEA Outcomes:

- In 21-22, Washington County School District (WCSD) opened 778 seats of full-day kindergarten and when given the option to enroll, 96% of families opted in. Their outcomes include:
 - In 20-21, Acadience Reading kindergarten data for the middle of the year was 64% at/above benchmark and 57% growth. Last year, WCSD began implementing FDK. Those FDK students reached 79% at/above benchmark and 74% growth at the middle of the year.
 - In March of 2021, only 60% of kindergarten students knew all their letters and sounds. With FDK implementation, by November of 2021, it was 90%.
 - In fall of 2022, WCSD had the highest percentage of first grade students starting the year at/above benchmark compared to all their previous years due to FDK implementation.

- Due to demand from parents, 100 of 101 kindergarten classes in WCSD are FDK in 22-23.

Cost Benefit Analysis:

- The return on investment in full-day kindergarten is between \$3.00 and \$7.00 for every dollar spent ([Grieve, 2019](#)).
- There is a direct correlation between effective early learning programs and a student's likelihood of dropping out of school. The average dropout will cost the public \$272,000 over their lifetime ([NCES, 2018](#)) and ([NDCP, 2022](#)).
- The full impact scenario shows a return for society of \$4.8 dollars for every dollar invested and the return to taxpayers is \$3.4 dollars ([Wilder Research, 2012](#)).
- The academic benefits of the full-day program were found to offset nearly 19% of the actual additional costs over half-day kindergarten. It's cost-effective, because the savings that it yields ([via reduced grade retention, etc.](#)) help offset the cost of providing it. ([Weiss and Offenber, 2002](#)).