

In 2018–19, approximately 84% of districts offer full-day kindergarten, 9% offer part-day kindergarten, and 7% offer both full-day and part-day kindergarten. The Pennsylvania Department of Education contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct a mixed-methods study to examine the implementation, impact, and cost of full-day kindergarten in Pennsylvania.

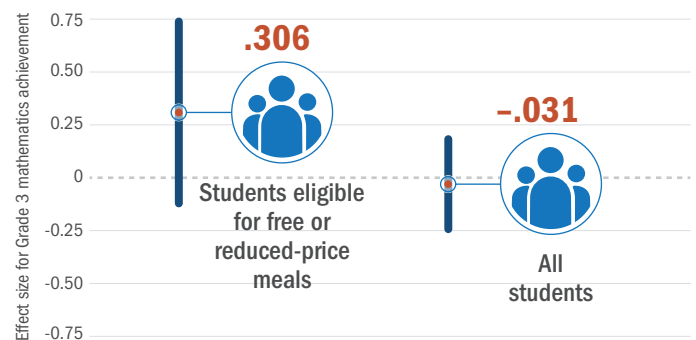
Interview data suggest that students who attended full-day kindergarten (FDK) were more confident and better prepared for first grade than students who had attended part-day kindergarten (PDK).



I think students are getting a richer experience with FDK ... By the end of the year they are doing really great stuff because they have the time to develop those skills rather than being in a rat race to get through things in a short amount of time. Also, having that developmental play in place has really helped their social development.

— Principal

Quasi-experimental impact analyses did not find effects of full-day kindergarten on Grade 3 English language arts and mathematics achievement for students overall. However, exploratory analyses found a substantively large effect (though not statistically significant) on Grade 3 mathematics achievement for students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.



What was important for successful implementation of full-day kindergarten?

District and building administrators reported that the following five tasks implemented during a planning year were important for successful implementation of full-day kindergarten:



Engaging Stakeholders

Involve families and teachers in planning



Planning Logistics

Develop plans for kindergarten classroom and overall school schedules



Selecting Staff

Identify teachers enthusiastic about full-day kindergarten



Professional Development

Focus PD on preparing teachers for full day, including visiting model schools



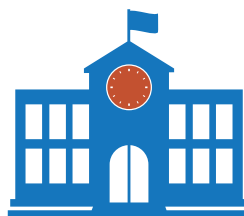
Expand Curricular Options

Identify curricula to expand kindergarten learning opportunities (e.g., social and emotional learning, writing)

What are the per student costs of kindergarten programs and the transition to full-day kindergarten?

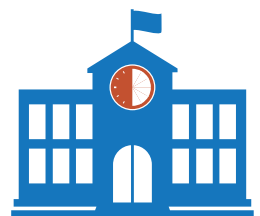
Implementation of full-day kindergarten required initial transition costs and ongoing annual costs. The number of students served per teacher was the main driver of the increase in ongoing costs, since PDK teachers provided instruction to approximately twice as many students as FDK teachers. Schools also needed to purchase additional classroom materials (such as tables, chairs, rugs, and instructional resources) for FDK.

Full-Day Kindergarten



\$8,028 per student

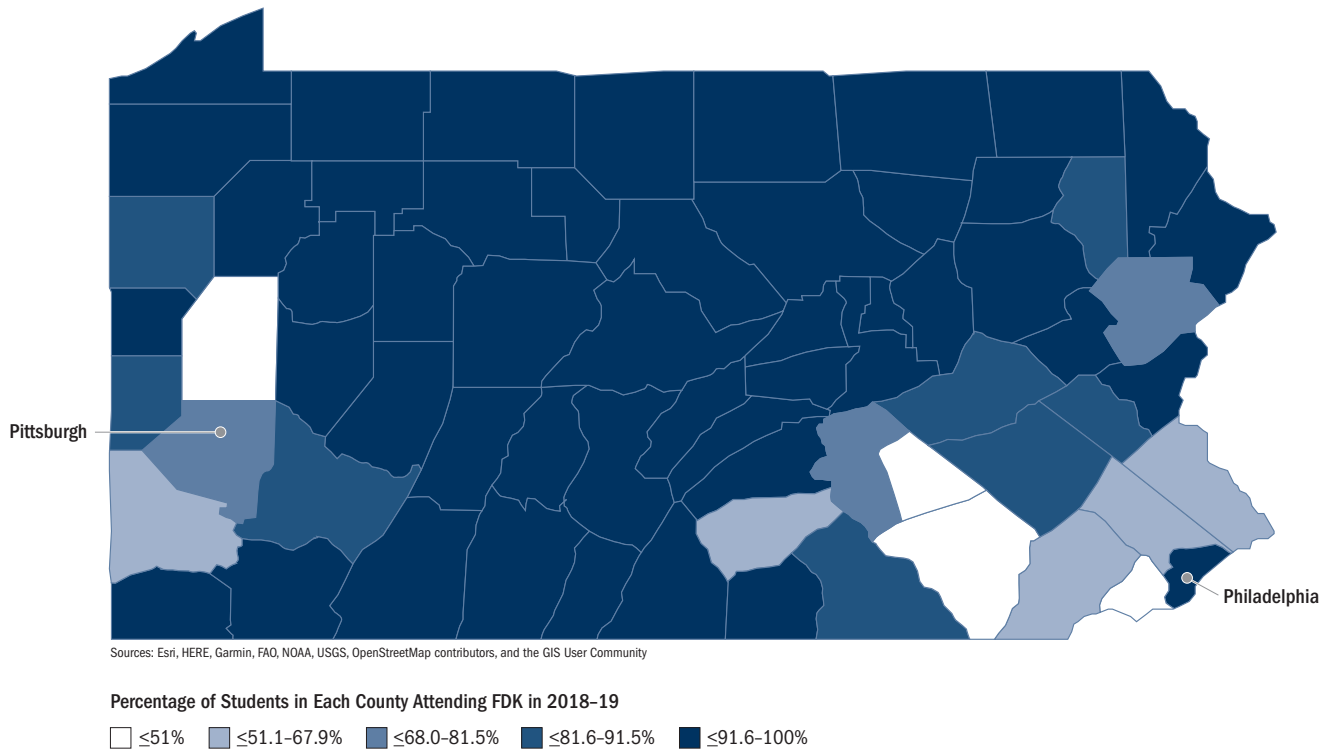
Part-Day Kindergarten



\$4,707 per student

The Public School Kindergarten Landscape Across the Commonwealth

Percentage of Students Enrolled in Full-Day Public Kindergarten, by County, 2018–19



The number of districts and schools offering full-day kindergarten has increased throughout the past decade. Student enrollment in FDK also has increased during the past decade, from 68% in 2009–10 to **81% enrolled in full-day kindergarten in 2018–19**.

Evaluation Overview

American Institutes for Research conducted an evaluation of implementation, impact, and costs of full-day kindergarten in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This study was commissioned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Using extant data provided by PDE, AIR employed a comparative interrupted time series (CITS) design to examine the impact of full-day kindergarten on student behavior and attendance in kindergarten as well as on their later reading and mathematics achievement in Grade 3. In addition, AIR conducted telephone interviews with a sample of district and building administrators to examine implementation considerations and costs.



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