

**Resolution in Support of Full-Day Kindergarten in all Fairfax Elementary Schools  
Fairfax County Council of PTAs**

**Whereas, full-day kindergarten is the norm across the country and in our region:**

- In 2009, about two-thirds of U.S. kindergarten children attend full-day classes;
- Locally, *only* Fairfax and Loudon counties provide less than 100% of schools with full-day kindergarten - Washington, D.C., Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, Prince William County, and Montgomery County have full-day kindergarten programs in all elementary schools;
- As of spring 2008, the surrounding states of Maryland, North Carolina, and West Virginia had all recognized the importance of full-day kindergarten by passing laws requiring that all kindergarten classes in the state be full-day;

**Whereas, research indicates that children benefit more, both academically and socially, from participation in full-day kindergarten programs than from participation in half-day programs:**

- The Fairfax County curriculum is the same for full-day and half-day kindergarteners, so it can be a great challenge for teachers in the half-day program to become familiar with 50-60 different children and their parents, to fully differentiate educational programs to handle the huge range of students' abilities, and to restrain from rushing through academic materials;
- The advantages of full-day kindergarten include providing a relaxed, unhurried school day with more time for a variety of experiences, greater opportunity for screening and assessment to detect and deal with potential learning problems, and more occasions for good quality interaction between adults and students;
- In the short-term, there is simply more time in a full-day program to learn core academic subjects like literacy and mathematics – studies suggest 30% more time on reading and literacy instruction and 46% more time on mathematics;
- More instructional time in full-day kindergarten allows for increased learning activities and strategies such as: group read-aloud, peer tutoring, mixed-ability grouping, and child-initiated activities;
- In the long-term, longitudinal studies have shown a positive relationship between participation in full-day kindergarten and later academic success;
- After comparing similar half-day and full-day programs in longitudinal studies, evidence has shown that full-day kindergartners exhibited more positive behaviors, including independent learning, classroom involvement, productivity in work with peers, and reflectivity than half-day kindergartners; and
- Despite often expressed fears that full-day kindergartners would experience fatigue and stress, school districts that have taken care to plan a developmentally appropriate, nonacademic curriculum with carefully-paced activities have reported few problems;

**Whereas, full-day kindergarten is particularly helpful in decreasing the achievement gap for students from low-income families:**

- According to FCPS, 25% of students are eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch, a federal benchmark of poverty, and for those lower-income students, every extra hour of schooling in the early years builds a foundation, decreases the achievement gap, and prepares them for learning in first grade and beyond;
- Every school in Fairfax County is accredited; this is partially because we are providing our children with the resources to succeed, starting in kindergarten; and
- As the County is getting more diverse, more and more low-income students live *throughout* the County, not concentrated in certain schools or pyramids -- those students with half-day programs would be “left behind,” and may even begin to jeopardize Fairfax’s proud Adequate Yearly Progress ratings, achievement scores, and fully-accredited status;

**Whereas, half-day kindergarten does not serve Fairfax’s working families** – according to Fairfax County’s most recent community assessment, almost 66% of 5-12 year-olds live in households where all the adults in the home are in the labor force, thus:

- Half-day kindergarten is a logistical nightmare, as School Aged Child Care (SACC) is not available at every school, nor is it easy to navigate the waitlist where many families wait years for needed spots,
- Most of those children have already been in full-time child care or extended nursery school settings,
- Teaching children in a half-day kindergarten program, *with only 2 hours on Mondays*, does not serve this County’s population; and
- Instead of shuffling between day care providers, these children could be having beneficial instruction from our great school system;

**Whereas**, academic and demographic changes in American society and education over the last 20 years—such as the increase in single-parent and dual-employment households and the fact that most children now spend a significant part of the day away from home—have contributed to the importance of full-day kindergarten programs in many communities, and Fairfax is strong evidence for this change;

**Whereas**, in 2006, in a reasoned decision-making process, the Fairfax County Superintendent, School Board, and Board of Supervisors determined to increase full-day kindergarten to 101 elementary schools, with plans to increase it to all elementary schools over the subsequent five years;

**Whereas**, the underlying reasoning for that plan has not changed, nor have the needs of the students and importance of full-day kindergarten, and with the growing socioeconomic diversity of FCPS students spread throughout the schools, we need it more now than ever before;

**Whereas**, budget problems caused the County to stop the implementation, and now there are approximately 9,570 students enrolled in full-day programs (at 102 elementary schools) and 2,650 students enrolled in the remaining half-day programs (37 elementary schools);

**Whereas**, local advocates have argued that with 517 fewer instructional hours, teachers cannot give students in half-day kindergarten the same educational experience as their counterparts in full-day kindergarten, and that such inequality among programs is an equity issue;

**Whereas**, according to Dr. Dale, the school system generally sees a 10 to 15 percent enrollment bump when a school begins full-day kindergarten because parents are less likely to choose a private program –

and that it is unfair that parents in schools with half-day programs need to send their children to private schools for one year to maintain academic rigor and logistical necessity;

**Whereas**, on February 3, 2011, after testimony by 200 supporters of full-day kindergarten, including members of Fairfax for Full Day Kindergarten and the Fairfax Association of Elementary School Principals, the School Board voted unanimously to direct Superintendent Jack D. Dale to return to them by May 2, 2011 a plan for implementing full-day kindergarten at the schools currently with half-day programs;

**Whereas**, the estimated cost would be \$8.1 million to implement full-day kindergarten in all Fairfax elementary schools (ironically, the same exact amount *required* by the State for FCPS to implement online testing this year),

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the Fairfax County Council of PTAs Executive Board supports full-day kindergarten in all Fairfax elementary schools; and

**Be it further resolved** that the FCCPTA Executive Board recognizes the School Board's efforts to create a three-year plan to implement full-day kindergarten in all Fairfax elementary schools starting in FY2012 and fully implemented by FY2014;

**Be it further resolved** that the FCCPTA Executive Board urges the Fairfax Board of Supervisors to start funding said implementation plan in the FY2012 budget year, by transferring sufficient funds to FCPS to implement full-day kindergarten in as many schools as economically and physically feasible; and

**Be it further resolved** that the FCCPTA Executive Board urges the FCPS School Board to transition the remaining 37 elementary schools with half-day kindergarten programs into full-day programs in the FY2012 budget year.

Adopted March 7, 2011  
Fairfax County Council of PTAs Executive Board

There are a multitude of studies supporting full-day kindergarten.

<http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/fullday.html>

[http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/6research\\_summaries/06\\_FDKvsHDK.pdf](http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/6research_summaries/06_FDKvsHDK.pdf)

<http://dpi.wi.gov/ec/ecadflpg.html>

Excellent, well-balanced research summary of benefits of full-day kindergarten -

<http://74.125.95.132/search?q=cache:We660wVCrU4J:www.ksde.org/LinkClick.aspx%3Ffileticket%3DhdmPMU%252FVsnw%253D%26tabid%3D232%26mid%3D670+benefits+of+full-day+kindergarten+advantaged+children&cd=20&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>