



**District 191  
All-Day Kindergarten Program  
Longitudinal Findings 2003-06**

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## Key Findings in District 191 Full-Day Kindergarten Study

### **Longitudinal findings about the cohort of students who attended District 191 Full-Day Kindergarten during the 2003-04 school year (called the “Universal Full-Day Cohort”) who were in their third grade year (Fall, 2006), as of this report:**

- Made growth in all academic areas in kindergarten, closing gaps between racial, language (ELL/English) and socioeconomic (free or reduced lunch status) groups.
- As a group, the universal full-day kindergarten cohort entered and exited both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades ahead of the national average. They continued to record above average performance into 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Gains during first grade were statistically significant.
- While 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Gates scores for Fall 2006 dipped somewhat from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Spring 2006 results (from 62.33 to 55.05), the group average Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in Fall 2006 for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade were at or above 60 for both reading and math.
- Statistically significant differences in scores of at-risk and not at-risk students (based upon free or reduced lunch, racial group, and ELL status) were found at nearly every point in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers reported higher achievement and better behavior in this group than in previous classes.
- By 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, teachers continued to report a noticeable positive difference in the academic preparedness of this group, with little difference in social or emotional readiness. Most teachers in the district reported changing their use of curriculum materials to present a faster paced and more advanced level of work for students who came to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade with above average skills.

### **Academic Achievement Findings for Full-Day vs. Half-Day Kindergarten**

- Full-day cohorts scored significantly higher than half-day students did in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
  - This is true of whole-group comparisons as well as for every sub-group examined (FRL, ELL, Minority)
  - Universal full-day cohort scores were significantly higher than the fee-based full-day cohort (04-05 kindergarten class) at the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

### **Findings for Students Considered to be At Risk**

- All risk groups (FRL, ELL, minority) performed better in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade when they had attended full-day rather than half-day kindergarten.
- During the 04-05 school year, far more students received FRL, had a home language other than English, and were racial minorities had attended the free half-day kindergarten program rather than fee-based full-day program.
- Teachers reported concern that the difference in program enrollment (full-day versus half-day) increased the gap in opportunity between “haves” and “have-nots” and was ultimately related to differences in academic performance.

# **Part One**

## **Findings for the Universal Full-Day Cohort**

### **Previous Years' Findings:**

- **Kindergarten Achievement Summary**
- **1<sup>st</sup> Grade Achievement Summary**

### **Recent Findings:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade and Fall of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Achievement Results**

# PART ONE

## Universal Full-Day Kindergarten: Student Achievement Kindergarten through Second Grade Outcomes

### OVERVIEW

During the 2003-2004 school year, District 191 students participated in full-day kindergarten which was universally available (i.e., at no cost) for all age-eligible District 191 children. This group of students represents a unique cohort because the all-day schedule had never been applied in District 191 in the past. The full-day program was discontinued during the 2004-2005 school year due to a lack of funds to sustain it. This study seeks to examine the longitudinal outcomes for the unique cohort of children who participated in the universal full-day program of 2003-04, as well as the outcomes for the District 191 kindergarten students who began kindergarten in the following years, some of whom attended a fee-based full-day program and others who attended the traditional half-day program.

### SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS FINDINGS FOR THE STUDENTS AT THE END OF THEIR 2003-04 KINDERGARTEN YEAR

Data for all kindergarteners in District 191 were collected via teacher-made and teacher-administrated assessments of the students' learning in both fall and spring of the 2003-04 school year. These assessments ("inventories") measured student achievement in both math and language arts. In math, the following variables were assessed: numeral recognition, counting to 100, counting backward from ten, one-to-one correspondence, number concept-number symbol recognition. In language arts, the following variables were assessed: recognition of letters (upper and lower case), sounds in isolation, sight words, and word association. Each teacher collected and recorded the assessment data for their students. The data for all kindergarteners in District 191 were then shared with CAREI for analysis after the end of the school year.

Achievement results from kindergarten indicate that students in District 191 made considerable growth in all areas from fall to spring. Gaps between racial groups, language groups, and socioeconomic groups that existed in the fall were narrowed or eliminated by spring. As a group, students knew a mean of just over 19 upper case letters and 16 lower case letters at entrance to kindergarten. While a large number of students knew all 26 letters upon beginning school, enough students knew far fewer letters that the mean dropped to this level. At the end of kindergarten, nearly all students knew all 26 upper case and lower case letters. Similarly, students could produce approximately nine correct sounds in the fall, and almost 28 in the spring, could associate 10 sounds to words in fall and 27 in spring, and could read almost 4 sight words in fall and 29 in spring. A high percentage of students reached mastery levels in counting to 100

(74.2%), numeral recognition (92.1%), one-to-one correspondence (94.6%), and backward counting (93.1%).

In addition to directly observable achievement outcomes, observations as well as parent and teacher feedback supported the benefits of full-day kindergarten for these students. Teacher focus groups indicated that the full day allowed for more individualization of instruction, use of more extensive curriculum, and inclusion of activities that took core content to a deeper level. Classroom observations supported teachers' reports. Observations took place in District 191 as well as two comparison districts and revealed that full-day kindergarten allowed for more time devoted to lessons, greater amount and quality of unstructured writing, more use of small learning groups, and more self-directed learning. Parents reported that the transition into full-day kindergarten was "easy" for their children. Behavioral changes in children were also noted by parents. While some changes were good (i.e., improved bedtime behavior, maturity, better at following directions), others were not as welcome (e.g., complaining about going to school, fussiness at the end of the day). Overall, parents were satisfied with their children's academic and social experience in full-day kindergarten, and believed that their children would feel more confident going into 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Please see the Year One Evaluation Report for full description of these results.

#### **SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS FINDINGS FOR THE STUDENTS AT THE END OF THEIR 2004-05 FIRST GRADE YEAR**

The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests assess early literacy skills such as initial consonants and consonant clusters, vowels, final consonants and consonant clusters, and basic story words. At the fall administration of the Gates-MacGinitie in 2004, the district average normal curve equivalent (NCE) was 56.19. A NCE score of 50 is considered to be normal grade-level progress and will always have a value of 50, with the assumption that the average measured score keeps pace with the learning that is ongoing for students. First grade students across the district made statistically significant (one-sample t-test;  $p > .001$ ) progress against the national average during the year, and produced a spring average of 65.75. This demonstrates a true gain, as scores are quarter-normed to represent a student's scoring level in comparison to same-grade peers at any given point in the school year. That is, spring raw scores of an individual are compared with the national sample of scores at that same point in the school year in order to derive a normal curve equivalent and percentile rank. Had District 191 students progressed at a rate equal to the national rate, their spring NCE would have remained 56.91. One school in the district had administered the Gates-MacGinitie across several years. Results indicated that incoming 1<sup>st</sup> graders had lower average scores during years in which universal full-day kindergarten was not implemented. Students in that school produced high spring scores regardless of their kindergarten program.

During the fall of 2004, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers in District 191 and a comparison district were asked to complete surveys about their experiences during the first two to three weeks of school. Questions asked teachers to compare their experiences teaching students who had attended half-day kindergarten and those who had attended full-day kindergarten. In District 191, all 1<sup>st</sup> grade students who attended kindergarten in the district had attended all-day kindergarten. Conversely,

in the comparison district, all-day kindergarten was provided with a fee, and many students attended half-day kindergarten instead.

Overall, the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers perceived several academic, social and emotional benefits experienced by students who have attended full-day kindergarten programs. A large percentage of teachers in District 191 in particular appeared to strongly support the full-day kindergarten program. Specific gains were reported in the areas of early reading skills, writing, math, behavior, and adjustment to the school routine.

Comparison district teachers were somewhat less convinced of the changes that a full-day or half-day program had promoted in their students. In most cases, comparison district teachers had only one or two full-day students in each classroom. Out of necessity, their responses tended to describe the characteristics of those individual students rather than of an entire class. In addition, several teachers expressed hesitancy to attribute changes in referral rates for supplemental services or adjustment difficulties specifically to experience in the full-day program.

In summary, the cohort of universal full-day kindergarten students completed 1<sup>st</sup> grade with several apparent advantages over students who had not attended full-day kindergarten. Their 1<sup>st</sup> grade achievement scores were ahead of the national average, and they gained skills at a more rapid pace than the average American student. The results of one school's achievement testing suggested that students who did not partake in universal full-day kindergarten entered 1<sup>st</sup> grade with lower academic proficiency than their universal full-day counterparts. Teacher surveys indicated full-day kindergarten benefits in academics and in behavior. Please see the Year Two Evaluation Report for full description of these results.

## **FINDINGS FOR THE STUDENTS AT THE END OF 2005-06, THEIR SECOND GRADE YEAR AND EARLY FINDINGS FOR THEIR THIRD GRADE ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS**

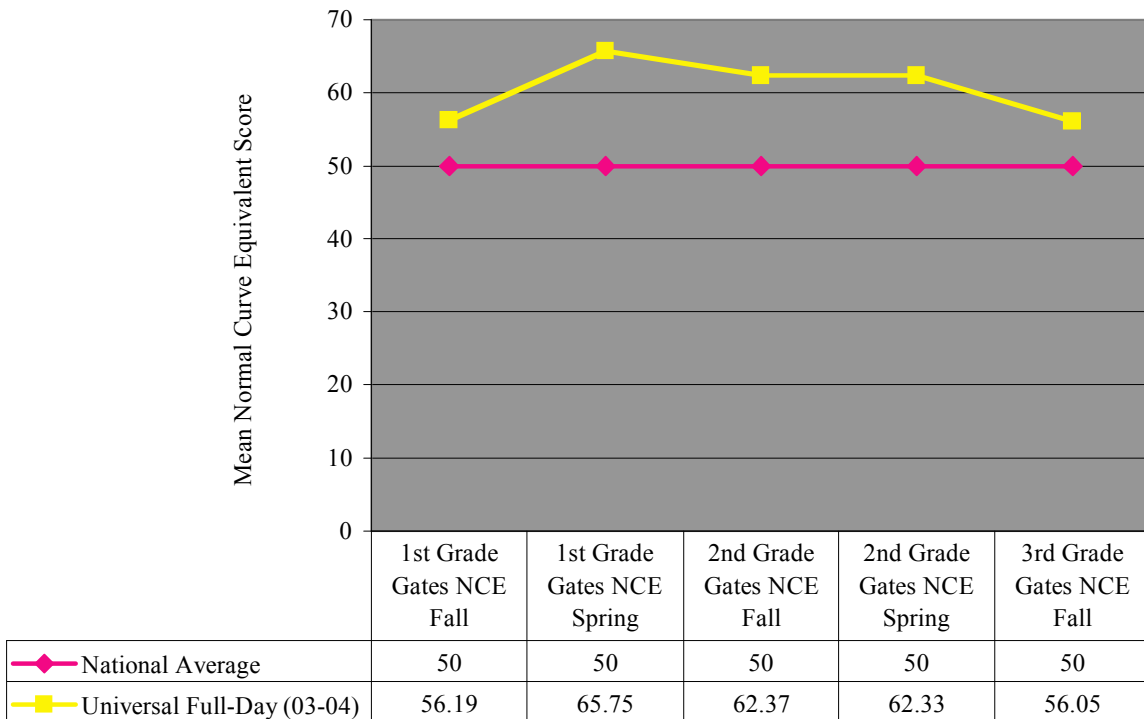
During the 2005-2006 school year, children who had attended universal full-day kindergarten in District 191 were in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. They participated in the Gates-MacGinitie achievement test during the fall and spring of their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade years. At the time of this current report, these students have also taken the fall 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Gates-MacGinitie test, as well as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in reading and math. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests assess early literacy skills learned in a given grade. In 1<sup>st</sup> grade, the test focuses on initial consonants and consonant clusters, vowels, final consonants and consonant clusters, and basic story words. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Gates-MacGinitie measures students' skills in the areas of word decoding, word knowledge, and comprehension. Finally, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade version of the test, taken in the fall of 2006, includes subtests in vocabulary and comprehension.

## Summary: Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and Iowa Test of Basic Skills

### Results from the Gates-MacGinitie Test

As a group, the universal full-day kindergarten cohort entered and exited both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades ahead of the national average on the Gates test. They continued to record above average performance into 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. As reported in the Year 2 Report for this project, at the fall administration of the Gates-MacGinitie in 2004, the district average normal curve equivalent (NCE) was 56.19. As 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students, this same group of children scored an average NCE of 62.37 on the fall administration of the Gates-MacGinitie. The rapid and significant ( $p < .001$ ) growth seen during 1<sup>st</sup> grade was not duplicated, but they maintained steady progress to finish the year with an average score of 62.33 in the spring. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade fall to spring change was not significant. The same group of students produced a fall 3<sup>rd</sup> grade mean of 56.05. A graphic depiction of these scores is presented below.<sup>1</sup>

**Gates-MacGinitie Results in 1st-3rd Grade: Universal Full-Day Cohort**



<sup>1</sup> Please note that all numerical data shown in this report are based the most complete and current figures available at the time the report was written. Due to improved record-keeping by the district, the data reported here supersede that which may be found in all previous reports.

### **Results from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills**

As third graders during the school year of 2006-07, the universal full-day cohort students also took the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) as a measure of their reading and math achievement. Results of the ITBS indicate that these students score above the national average in both subject areas. The average normal curve equivalent (NCE) score for students who attended the Universal Full-Day Kindergarten program was 60.29 in reading and 62.59 in math. The ITBS reading score is comparable to their NCE score on the Gates-MacGinitie test which they took as 2<sup>nd</sup> graders.

## DIFFERENCES BY STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES FOR UNIVERSAL FULL-DAY COHORT

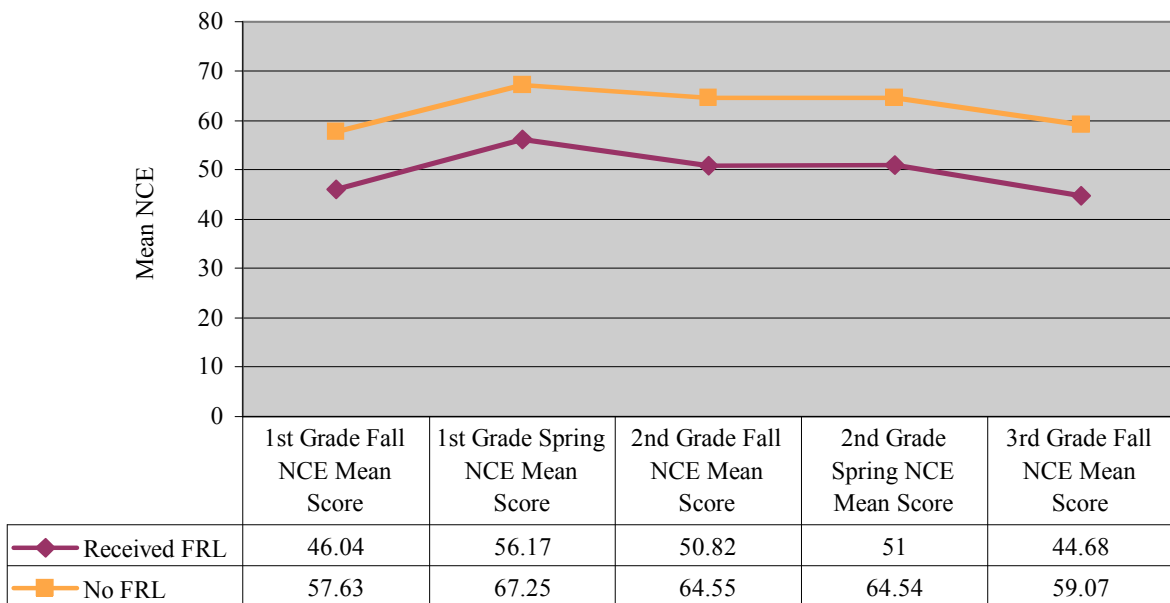
### Outcome Differences by Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Status

When the full-day students' scores were examined in groups based on free or reduced-price lunch status, some differences emerged. Free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) status is considered a measure of socioeconomic status, as family income determines eligibility for this program.

An examination of means of both groups indicated significant differences between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade fall and spring test scores. Students who paid full price entered 1<sup>st</sup> grade with an average NCE of 57.63. Students who received free or reduced-price lunch scored an average of 46.04.

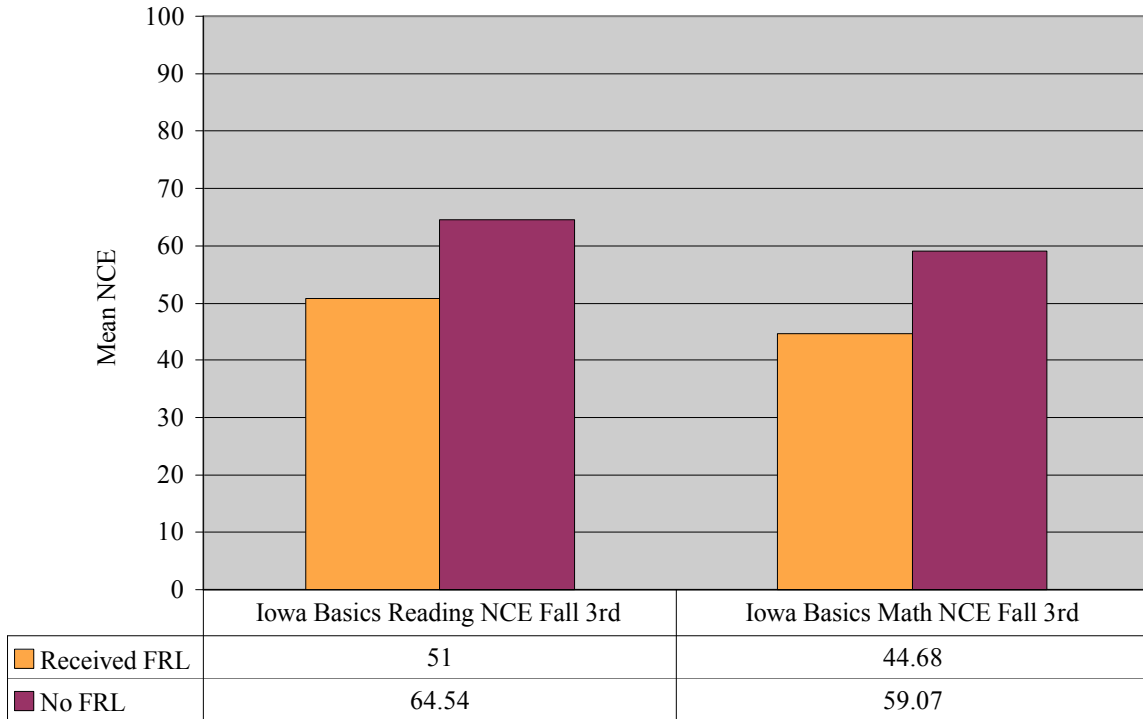
At each administration of the Gates-MacGinitie test in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, students who received free or reduced-price lunch scored significantly ( $p < .001$ ) lower scores than students who paid full price in an analysis of variance (ANOVA). This was true on the Iowa Basics test in both math and reading as well ( $p < .001$ ). The results are depicted in the following graph:

**Gates-MacGinitie Outcomes by FRL Status**



Results of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills administered in fall 2006, when the universal full-day kindergarten cohort was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, indicate that students who received free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) obtained lower average scores in both math and reading than students who did not receive FRL.

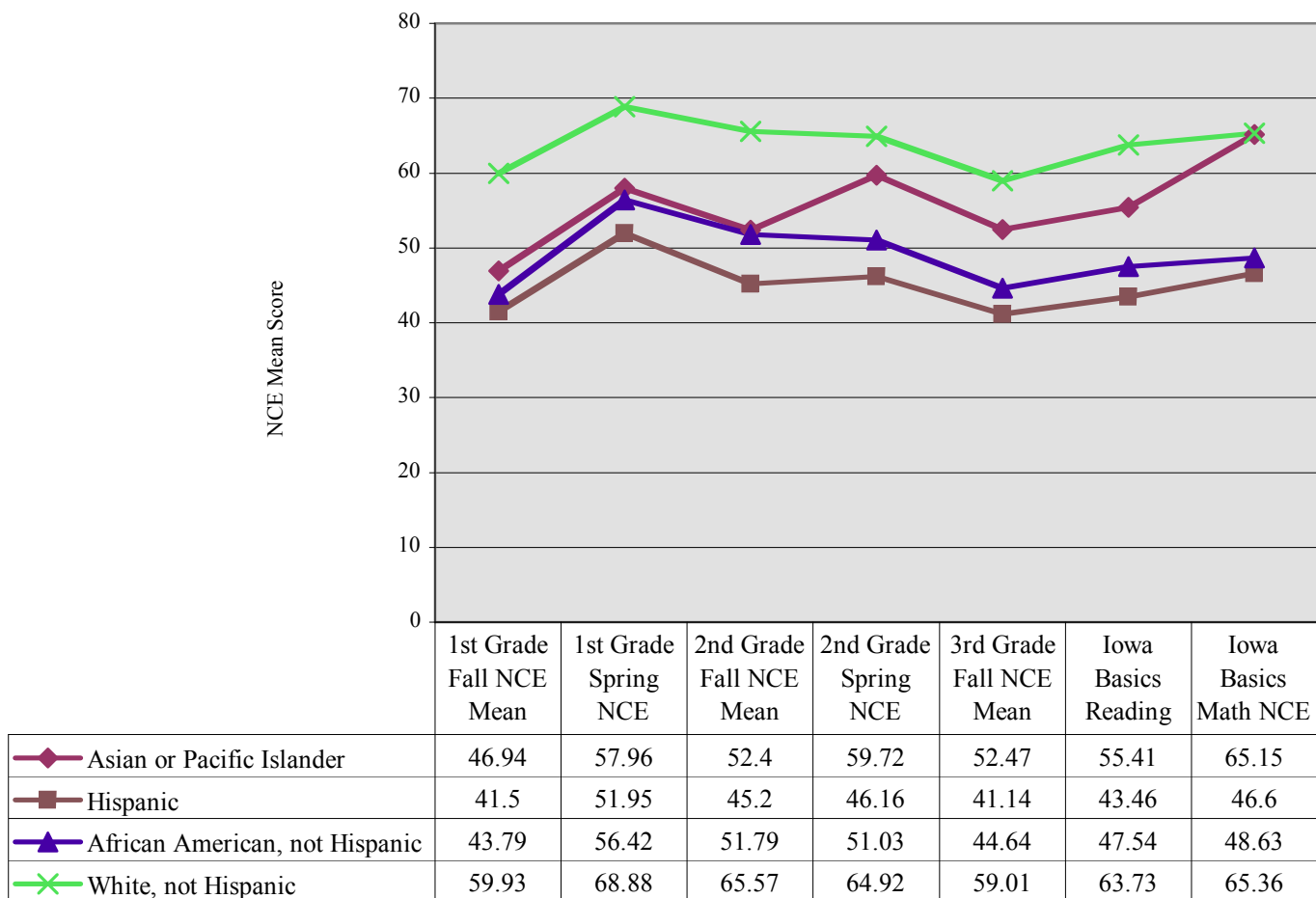
### ITBS Scores by FRL Status



## Outcome Differences by Racial Status for Universal Full-day Cohort

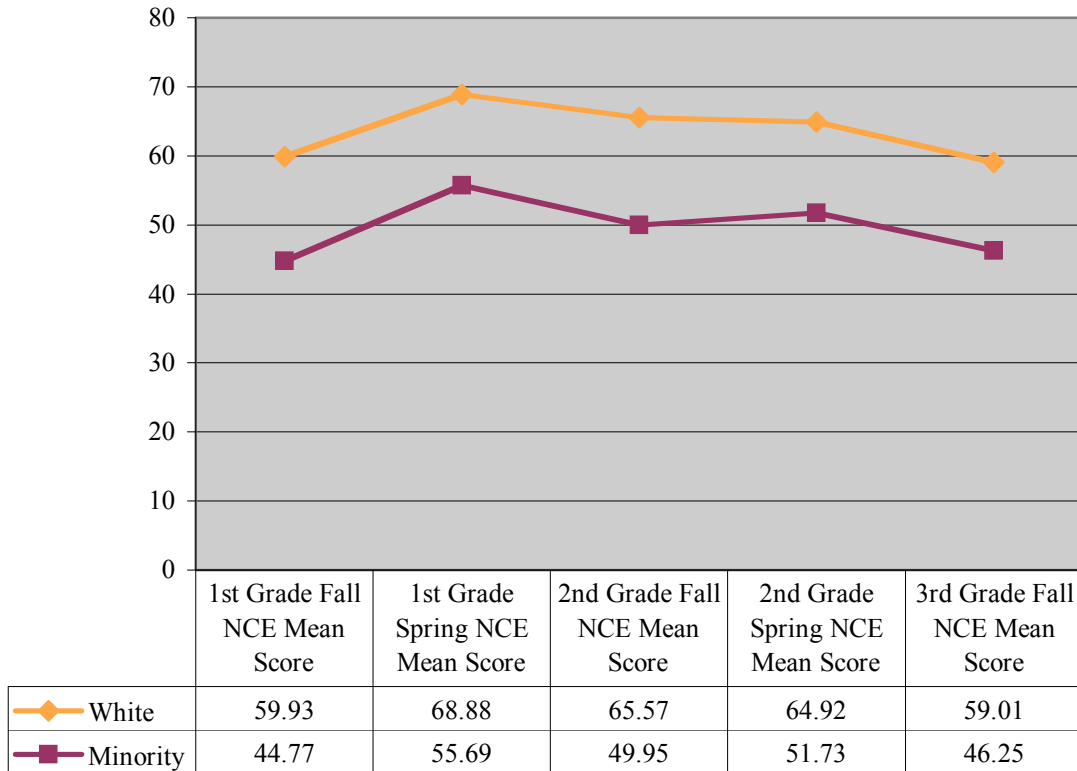
Differences also existed between racial groups at each administration of the Gates-MacGinitie. A statistical analysis (ANOVA followed by post-hoc comparisons using the Least Significant Difference test to compare every group to every other group) of differences in mean scores between groups showed that white students produced higher mean scores than any other group in 1<sup>st</sup> grade (both fall and spring) and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (fall only). In the spring of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, white students no longer scored significantly higher than Asian American students. White students continued to score significantly higher than African American and Hispanic students during the spring of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. These trends persisted into the fall of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade on both the Gates-MacGinitie and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in reading and math. Asian American students scored significantly lower than white students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Reading on the ITBS, but were not significantly different on the math section of the ITBS.

**Gates-MacGinitie Outcomes by Racial Group: Universal Full-Day Cohort**



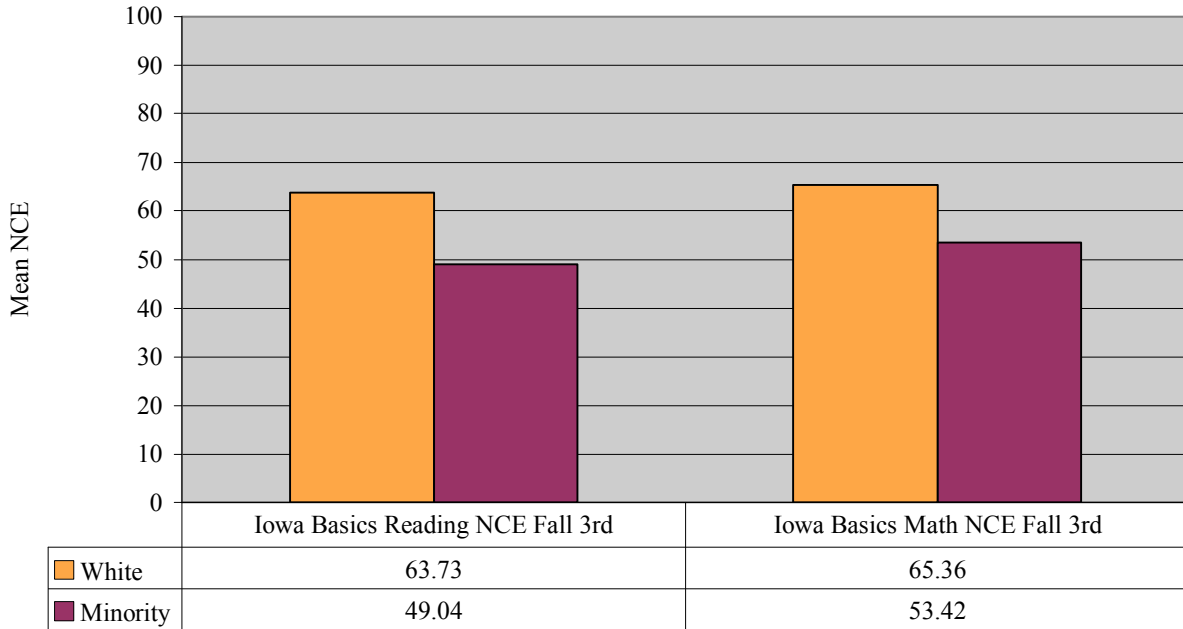
The following graph depicts the same data from the previous graph, with all minority groups combined into one line and white student scores on the other. The differences between the achievement scores for the two groups were significant at each point of test administration.

### Gates-MacGinitie Outcomes



Iowa Test of Basic Skills results showed a similar trend as was seen in the Gates-MacGinitie outcomes. Both white and racial minority students scored above the national average at entrance to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade according to this assessment. The graph below depicts these scores:

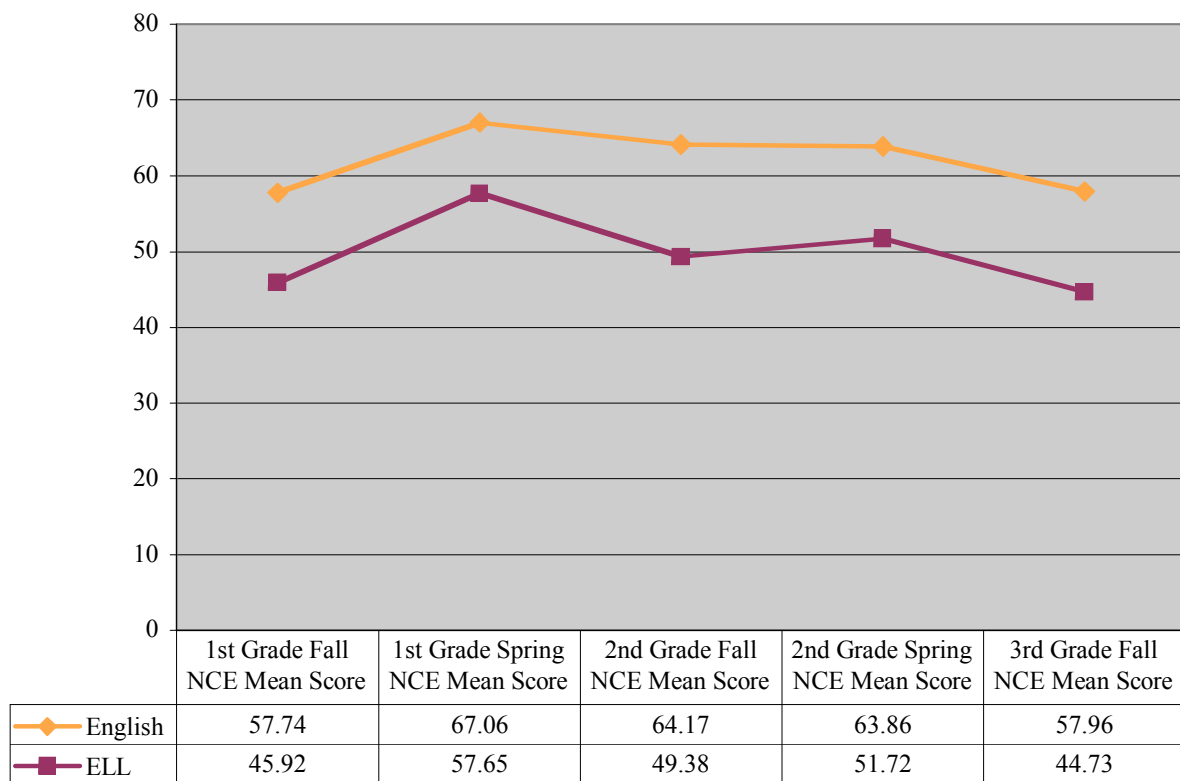
**ITBS Results: White and Minority**



## Outcome Differences by Language Status for Universal Full-day Cohort

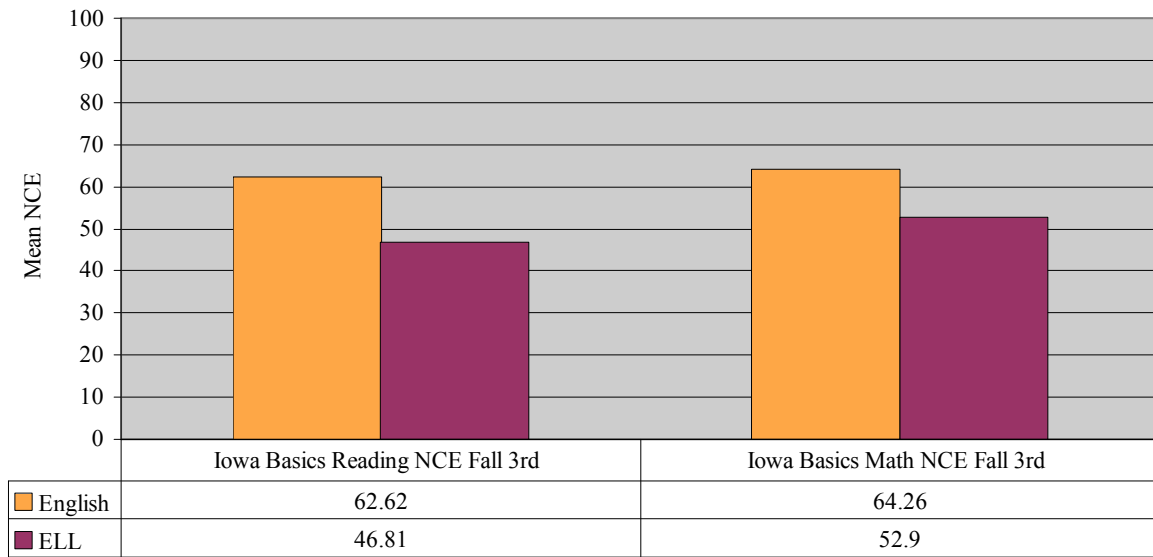
Finally, differences between language groups were examined. Students who were classified as English Language Learners (ELL) scored lower than native English speakers in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the fall of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. These differences were statistically significant according to an ANOVA. It should be noted, however, that while native English speakers scored higher than ELL students, the ELL students' scores fell near the national average at every point.

**Gates-MacGinitie Outcomes by ELL Status**



Again, scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in reading and math mirrored the findings from the Gates-MacGinitie test for English Language Learners versus native English speakers:

**ITBS Results: English and ELL**



In summary, an achievement gap between racial groups and ELL and non-ELL students existed in every Gates-MacGinitie assessment in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades. The gap grew during the time between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades (e.g., the summer months). The results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills reflected the gap between English speakers and ELL students as well.

## **Part Two**

### **Full-Day and Half-Day Kindergarten – Comparison Across Cohort Type:**

- **Universal Full-day**
- **Fee-based Full-day**
- **Half Day**

**For**

**Demographics**

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade Achievement**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Achievement**

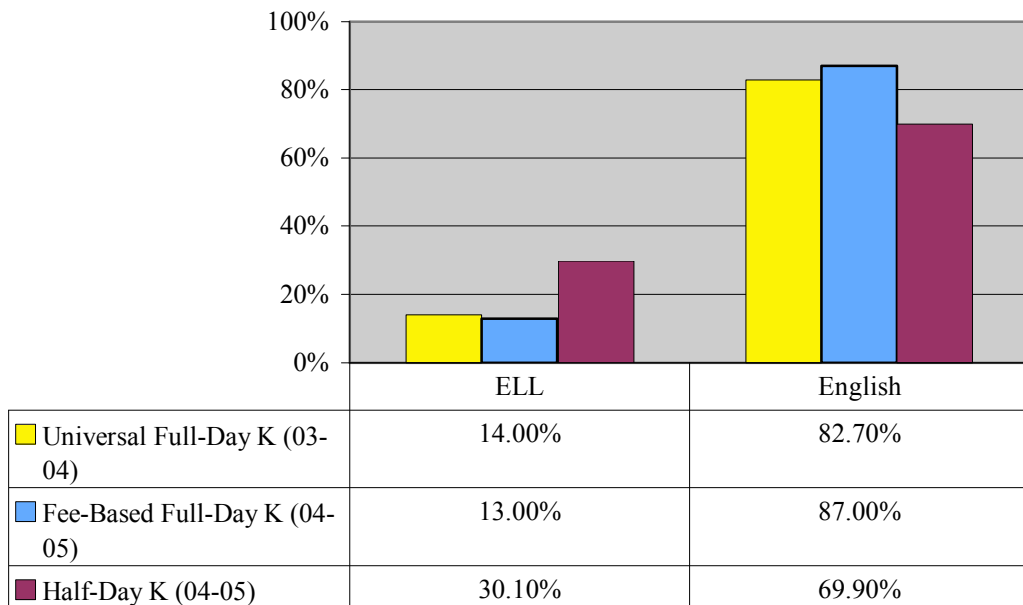
## UNIVERSAL FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN AND COMPARISON COHORTS: DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISON

During the 2004-2005 school year, District 191 discontinued universal full-day kindergarten and provided full-day kindergarten for a fee to some students. The demographic characteristics of 04-05 half- and full-day students were compared with one another and with students from the universal full-day program in 2003-2004. Results indicated differences between groups attending each type of kindergarten in terms of English language status, ethnicity, and free or reduced-price lunch status. Data presented represent those students for whom demographic information was available.

### ELL Status

Of the students in the universal full-day program, 14% were classified as English Language Learners (ELL). Similarly, 13% of the students were ELL in the fee-based full-day kindergarten the next year. But the half-day program included 30.1% ELL students. Thus, the percentage of ELL students rose in the 2004-05 kindergarten class overall, and the half-day program saw the most growth. ELL students represented Asian, Hispanic, and African American ethnic groups fairly equally. Of all students classified as ELL, 36.3% were Asian, 36% Hispanic, and 23.7% African. The graph below depicts the percentage of ELL students in each kindergarten group.

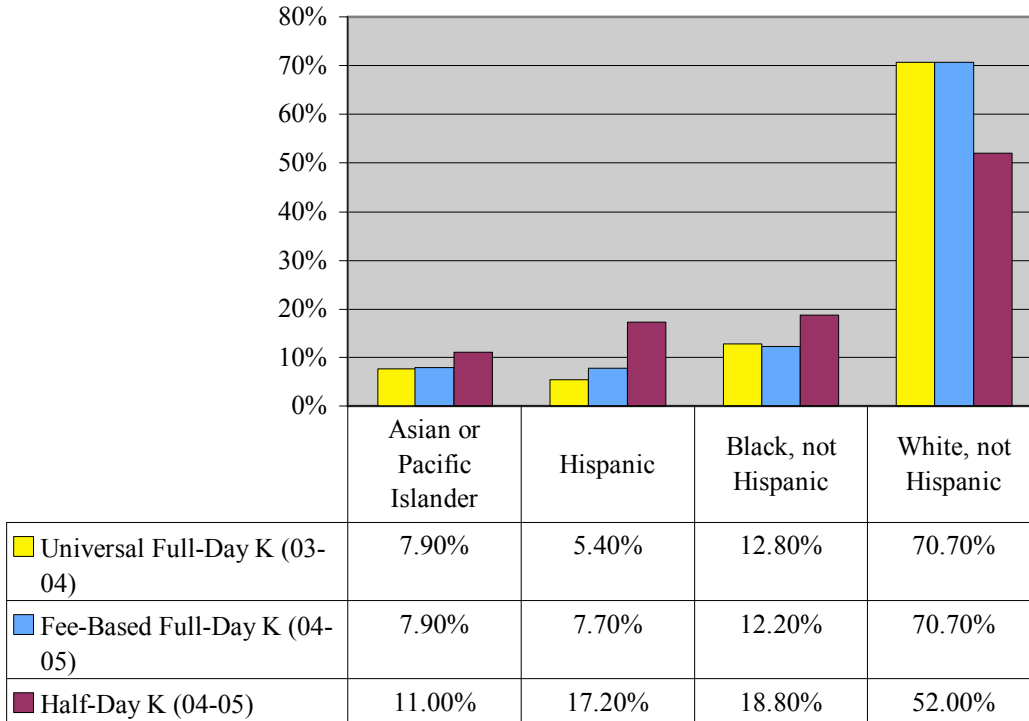
**Kindergarten Study Demographics: ELL Status**



## Racial Status

In the area of ethnicity, a similar trend emerged. While the full-day programs in 03-04 and 04-05 shared a similar percentage of each ethnic group, the half-day program in 04-05 showed a greater percentage of students of color than either full-day program.

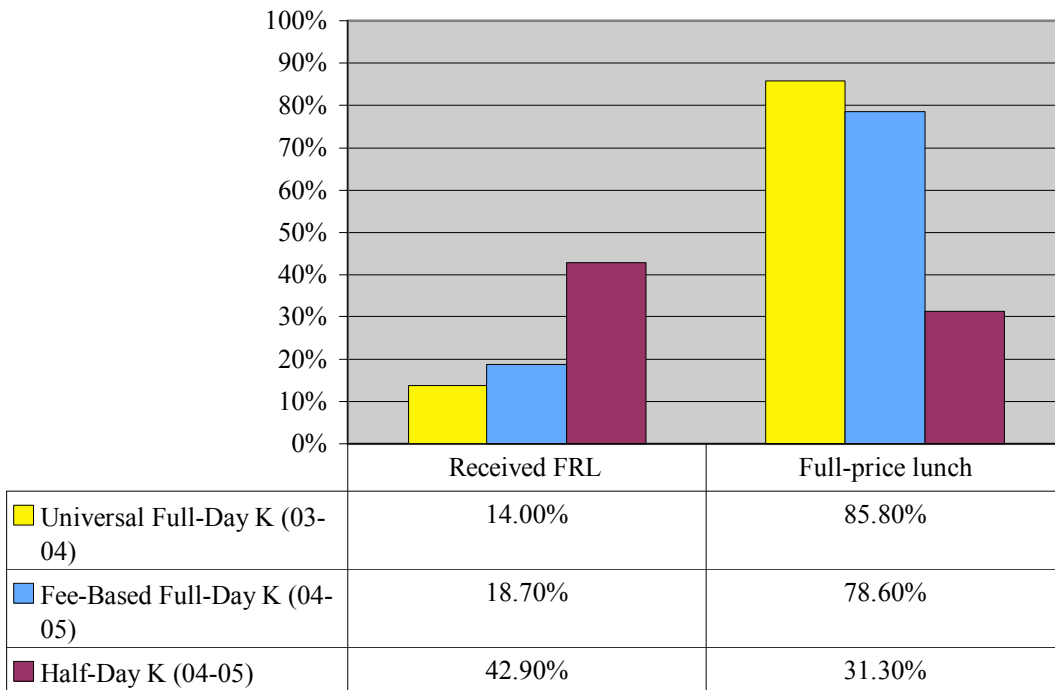
### Kindergarten Study Demographics: Racial Groups



## Free or Reduced Lunch Status

Finally, students attending half-day kindergarten were far more likely to receive either free or reduced-price lunch than students attending full-day kindergarten. While 10% and 17% of students received free or reduced lunch in the universal and fee-based full-day programs, respectively, 48% of students attending half-day kindergarten in 04-05 received free or reduced lunch. It should be noted that several students did not have free or reduced-price lunch data in the database. For example, nearly 25% of free or reduced-price lunch status data were missing for the 04-05 half-day kindergarten cohort.

**Kindergarten Study Demographics: Free or Reduced Price Lunch Status**



## **SUMMARY**

Overall, these data indicate that the half-day kindergarten group was composed of a more diverse student body in terms of ethnicity and language status. The 2004-2005 half-day kindergarten class had a higher percentage of racial minority, ELL, and free or reduced-price lunch recipients than did either full-day kindergarten program. The two full-day programs were similar in demographics.

## **SPECIAL CASE: INCOMING STUDENTS**

During each year of the study, students transferred into and out of School District 191. It is very important to note that the achievement data for transfer students has been kept separate from the achievement outcomes for the students who were in the original groups. See information on Page 31 of this report about the achievement outcomes for the incoming students.

Based upon the available test data for students for whom Gates-MacGinitie test scores were reported in either fall or spring of 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, or fall of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, a sizable number of students enrolled in District 191, in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades. A total of 303 students entered the Burnsville schools in either 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to become part of the original 2003-04 class. An additional 215 students enrolled in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to join the 2004-05 kindergarten cohort, for a total of 518 newcomer students.

Racial composition of this group is as follows: 2.9% American Indian, 10.2% Asian or Pacific Islander, 18.1% Hispanic, 26.8% Black, and 39.2% White. The incoming students included 24.1% ELL students. A total of 51.7% of the incoming students received free or reduced lunch. The demographic characteristics of the transfer students, including free/reduced lunch status, appear to be similar to the 04-05 half-day kindergarten group, and considerably more at-risk and diverse than either of the full-day cohorts.

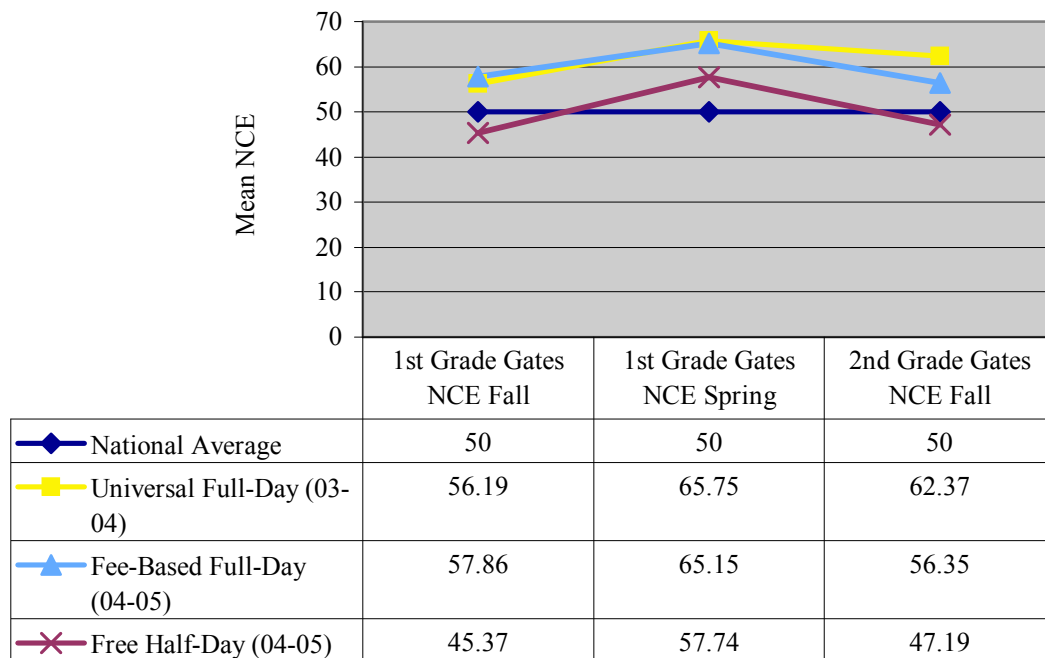
## UNIVERSAL FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN AND COMPARISON COHORTS: ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

### 1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE AND BEGINNING 2<sup>ND</sup> GRADE ACHIEVEMENT COMPARISON

First grade students during the 2005-2006 school year took the Gates-MacGinitie test, just as the universal full-day cohort had in 2004-2005. The students who had attended kindergarten in District 191 were enrolled in either a free half-day program or a fee-based full-day program. Although new students joined each class as they entered 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, the data presented in this report reflect only those students who attended kindergarten in District 191.

As noted earlier in this report, the universal full-day cohort entered 1<sup>st</sup> grade with an average NCE of 56.19 and finished with a spring average of 65.75. The following year, students who had attended fee-based full-day kindergarten scored an average fall NCE of 57.83 on the Gates-MacGinitie. Students who had attended half-day kindergarten scored a significantly lower 45.37. In spring of 2006, fee-based full-day kindergarten students earned a mean NCE of 65.2, with half-day kindergarten students finishing 1<sup>st</sup> grade with an average NCE of 57.74. This trend continued into the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. These data are depicted in the graph below:

**1st Grade Gates-MacGinitie Scores by Kindergarten Type**



While no significant difference was found between the achievement of the two full-day cohorts (the lines overlap in the graph above) during 1<sup>st</sup> grade, the half-day group was significantly lower than both full-day cohorts in fall and spring of 1<sup>st</sup> grade ( $p < .001$ ). In the fall of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, the

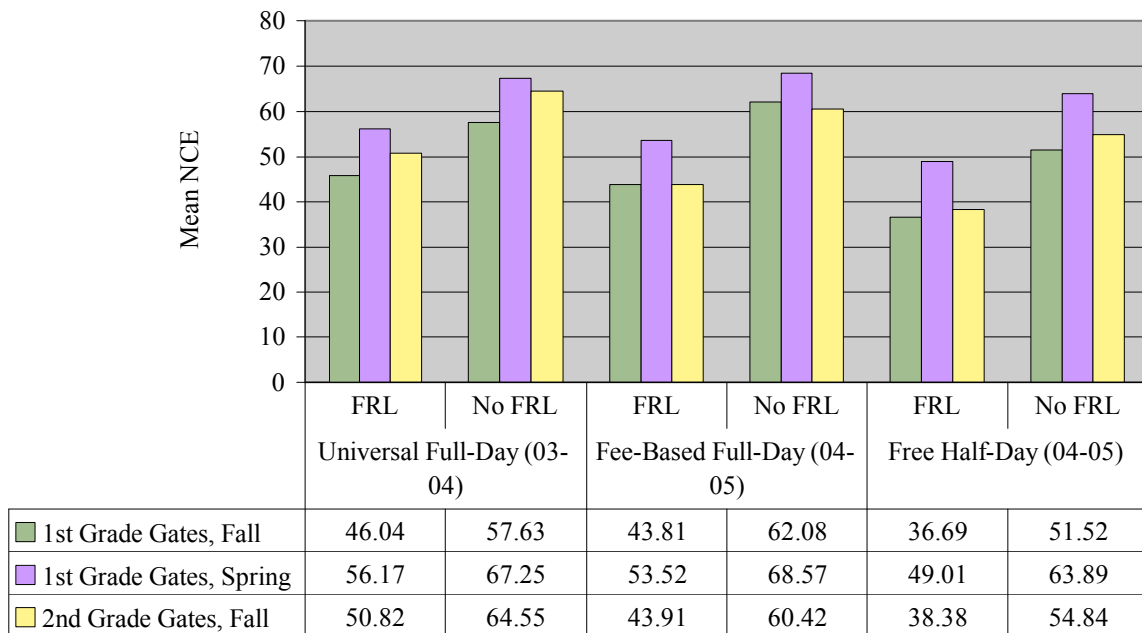
universal full-day cohort scored significantly higher than both of the other groups ( $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, the fee-based full-day group scored significantly higher than the free half-day group ( $p < .001$ ).

Each cohort of students was also compared in terms of differences in achievement between socioeconomic groups, English language status, and minority status. While students who did not receive free or reduced lunch (FRL) scored higher than those who received a price reduction in every case, the data varied somewhat by kindergarten group. A similar trend was seen with students who were classified as English Language Learners (ELL) or as minorities.

### Free or Reduced Lunch Status

The following graph illustrates 1<sup>st</sup> grade and beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> grade achievement by students who did or did not receive FRL.

**1st and 2nd Grade Gates-MacGinitie Scores: FRL Status**

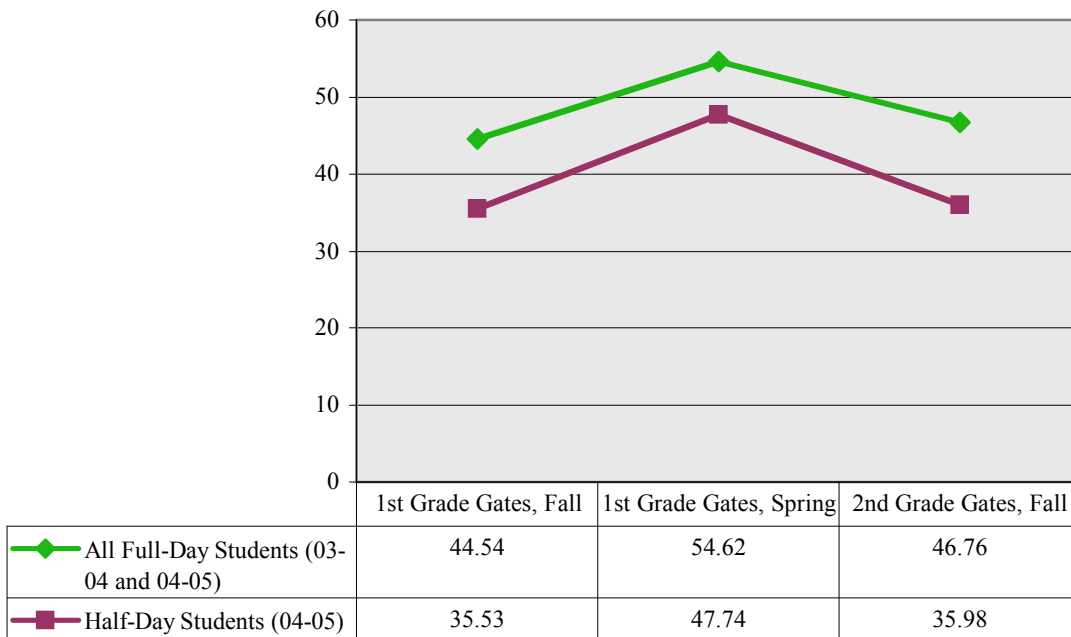


Clearly, all students made gains from fall to spring in their 1<sup>st</sup> grade years. The difference between achievement of students who receive or do not receive FRL is also apparent. Regardless of kindergarten type, students who did not receive FRL had an average score above the national average of 50 in both fall and spring of their 1<sup>st</sup> grade year, as well as in the fall of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Furthermore, children who received FRL scored significantly lower on average than their peers who did not receive FRL.

An examination of differences by kindergarten type for those students who received FRL revealed significant variation. Students who attended universal full-day kindergarten in 03-04 or

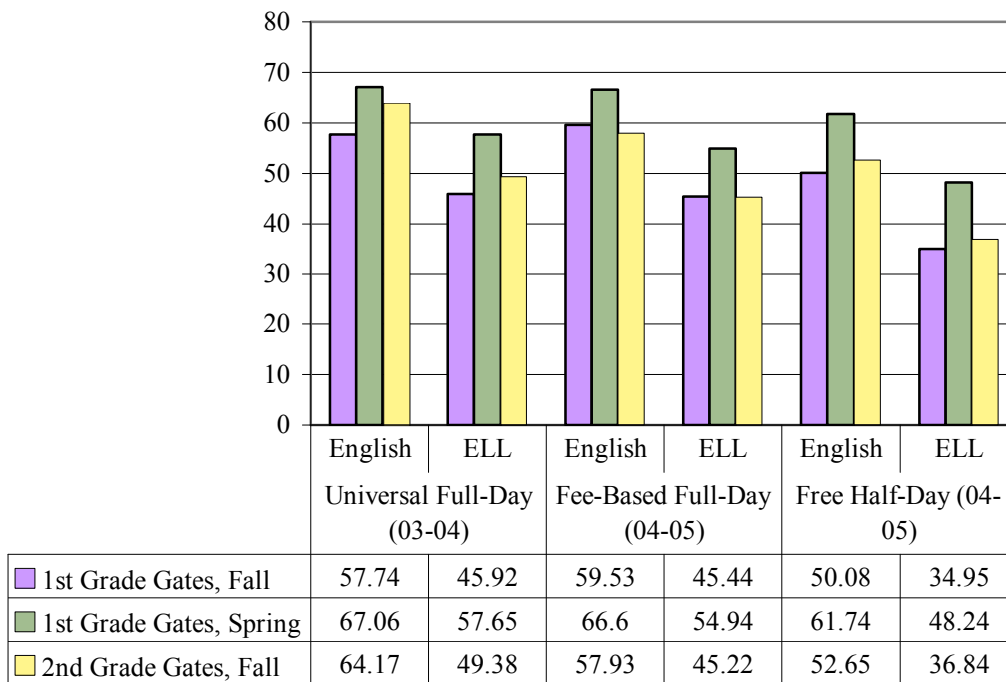
04-05 and who received free or reduced-price lunch performed significantly (ANOVA;  $p < .001$ ) higher on fall administrations of the Gates-MacGinitie than students who received FRL in half-day kindergarten in 04-05. During spring of 1<sup>st</sup> grade, the difference was marginally significant ( $p < .01$ ). This result is similar to the overall result that students who attend full-day kindergarten tend to score higher on the 1<sup>st</sup> grade and beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Gates-MacGinitie than do students who attended half-day kindergarten. These results are presented in the graph below.

**1st and Beginning 2nd Grade Gates-MacGinitie Outcomes: Students who Received FRL**



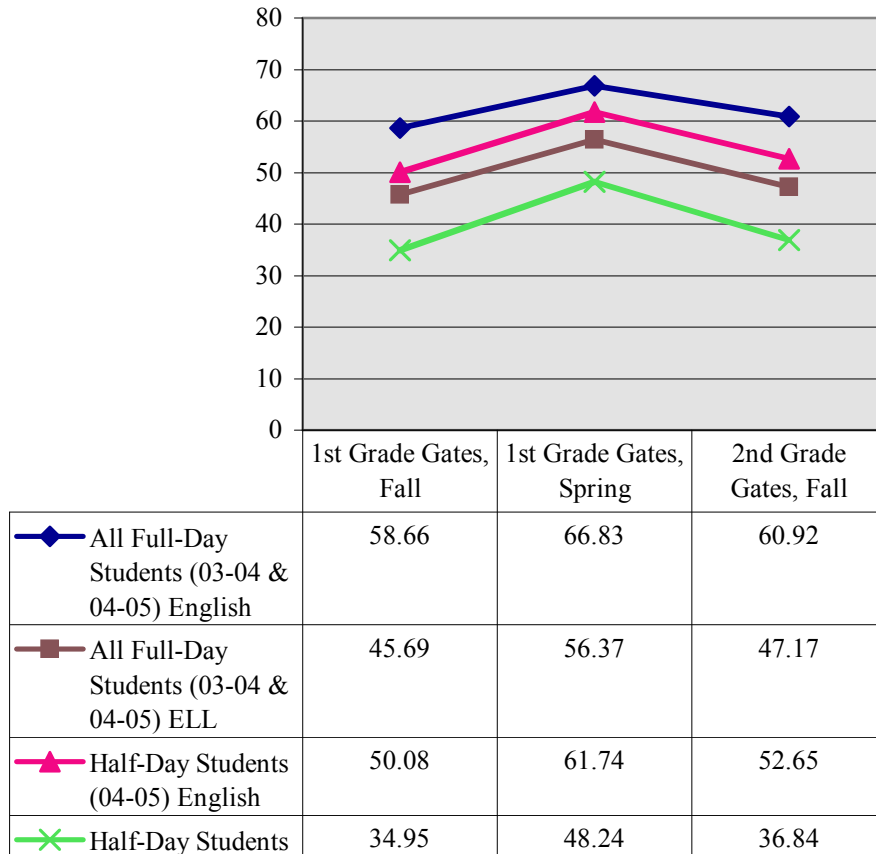
For ELL students, this trend was similar. These students performed significantly better (ANOVA;  $p < .001$ ) at each point when they had attended full-day kindergarten rather than half-day kindergarten. There was no significant difference between the universal full-day and fee-based full-day program students. In addition, ELL students' performance varied in a manner consistent with native English speakers. The graph below indicates that the scores between these groups are approximately the same distance from one another regardless of kindergarten type. That is, students who speak English as a native language and students who are classified as ELL are likely to produce the same amount of gain in 1<sup>st</sup> grade test scores when they attend full-day rather than half-day kindergarten. Students who received ELL services scored significantly higher when they attended full-day kindergarten, just as native English-speaking students did. All groups' scores dropped slightly upon entrance into 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

**1st and Beginning 2nd Grade Gates-MacGinitie Scores:  
Language Status**



The following graph depicts 1<sup>st</sup> grade growth of each group, with all full-day kindergarten students (03-04 and 04-05) in one group and half-day kindergarten students in another. Universal full-day scores were not significantly different from fee-based full-day scores.

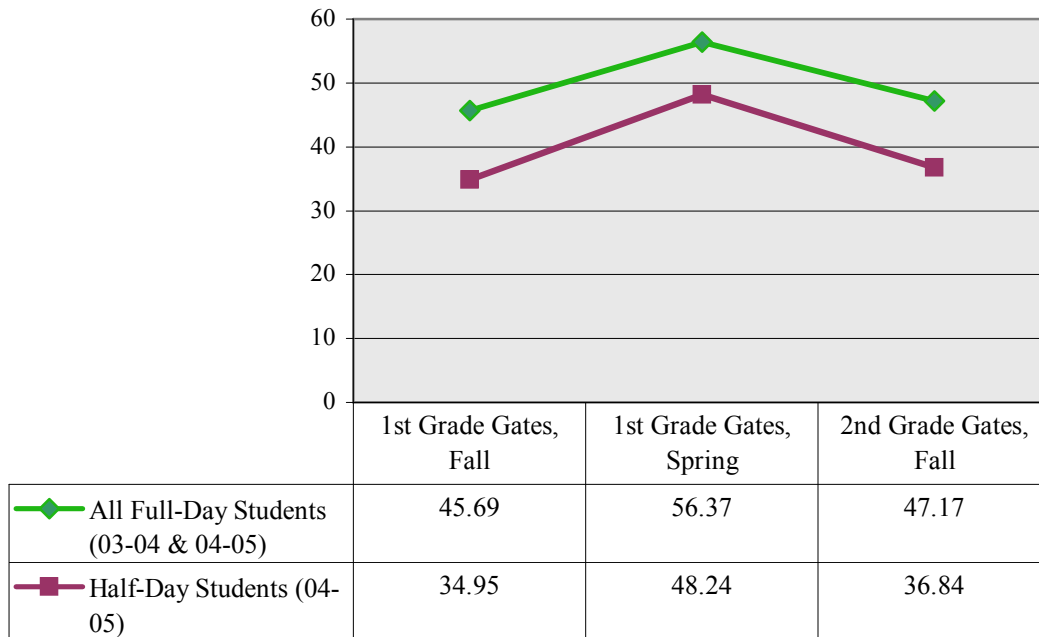
**1st and Beginning 2nd Grade Gates-MacGinitie:  
Half- vs. Full-Day Kindergarten and Language  
Status**



The above graph illustrates the difference between each group of native English-speaking students and ELL students depending on the kindergarten schedule they participated in. The ELL students who attended full-day kindergarten produced scores very similar to native English speakers who attended half-day kindergarten. Native English speakers who attended full-day kindergarten fared best, while ELL students who attended half-day kindergarten scored lowest on 1<sup>st</sup> grade tests.

Results for all ELL students without including an English-speaking comparison are depicted below. This includes 182 students who participated in full-day kindergarten and 96 students who attended half-day kindergarten.

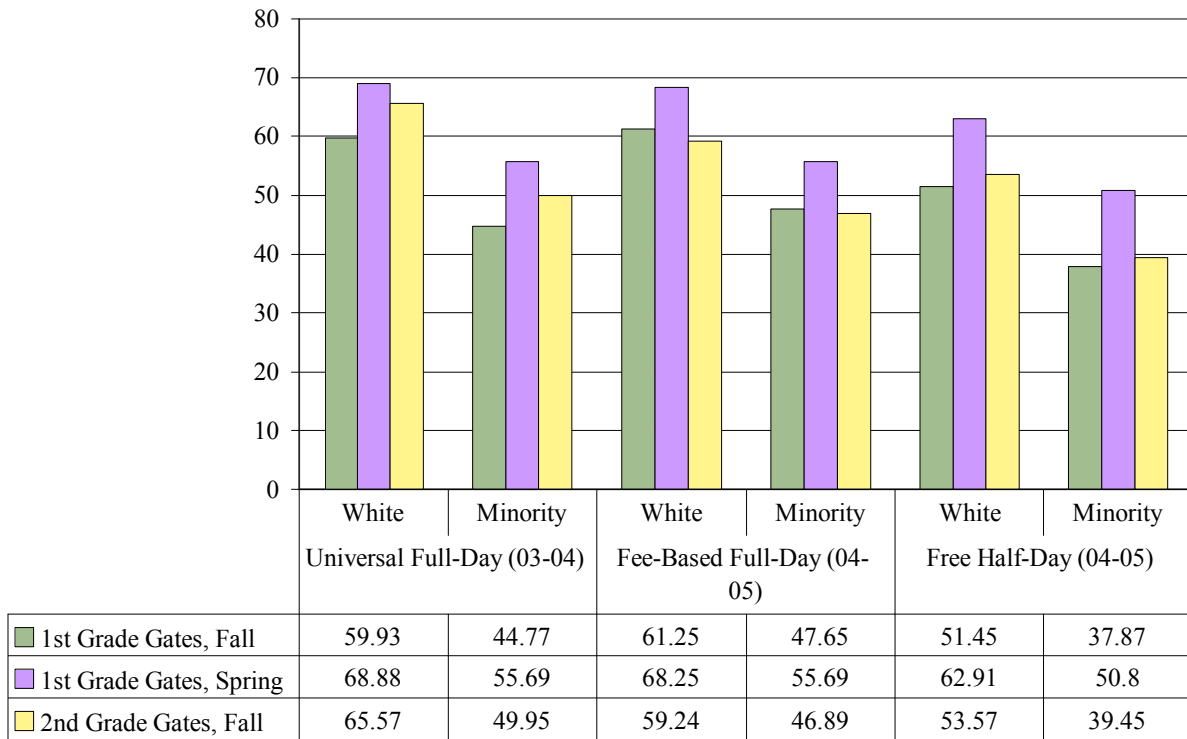
**1st Grade and Beginning 2nd Grade Gates-MacGinitie  
Outcomes: Students Identified as ELL**



As with students receiving FRL, students classified as ELL performed better on 1<sup>st</sup> grade and beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> grade assessments when they attended full-day kindergarten rather than half-day kindergarten. On average, they finished 1<sup>st</sup> grade ahead of the national average for all students, with a score of 56.37 (national average = 50). Half-day students also approached the national average by the end of 1<sup>st</sup> grade, but dipped far below the national average again at the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

Finally, differences between outcomes for racial minority and white students were examined, based on the kindergarten type attended.

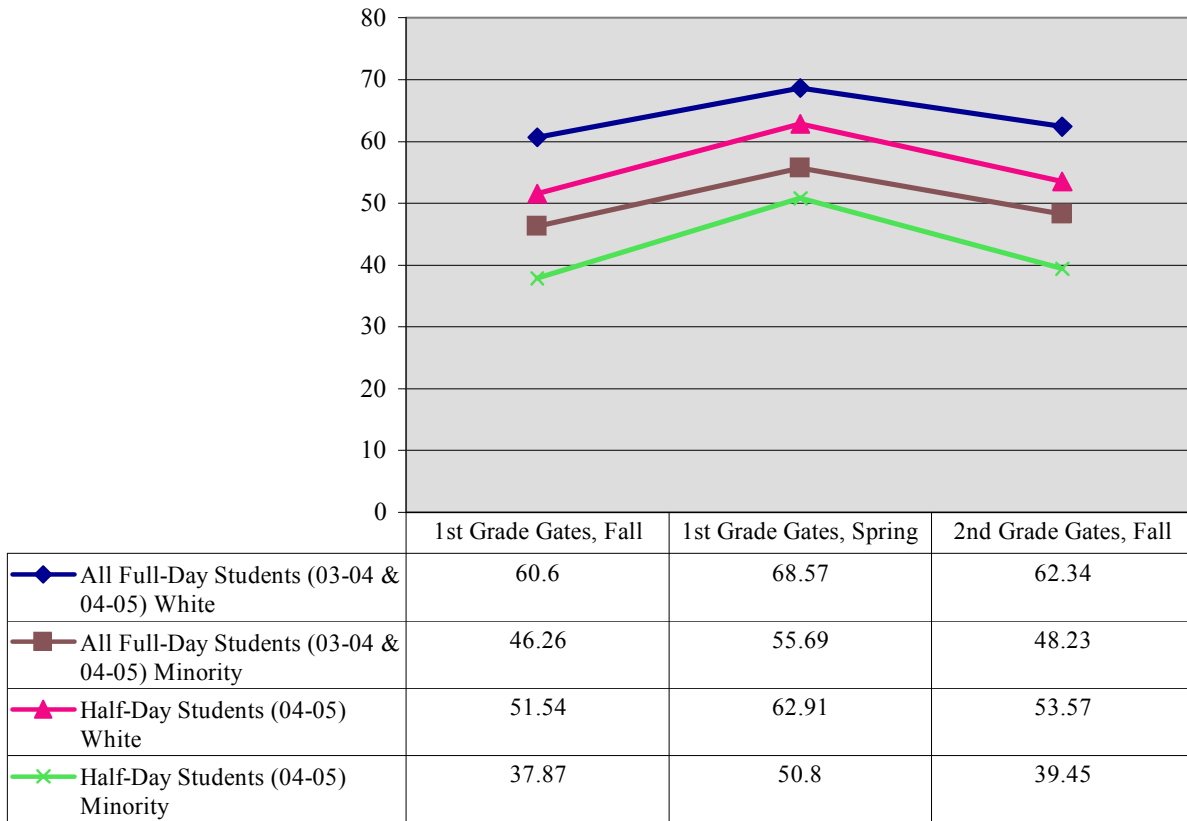
**1st and Beginning 2nd Grade Gates-MacGinitie Scores: Racial groups**



As with the other groups, these data show that both white and minority students made gains against the national average in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Students’ scores dropped somewhat at the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. In each case, white students produced a higher average score than minority students.

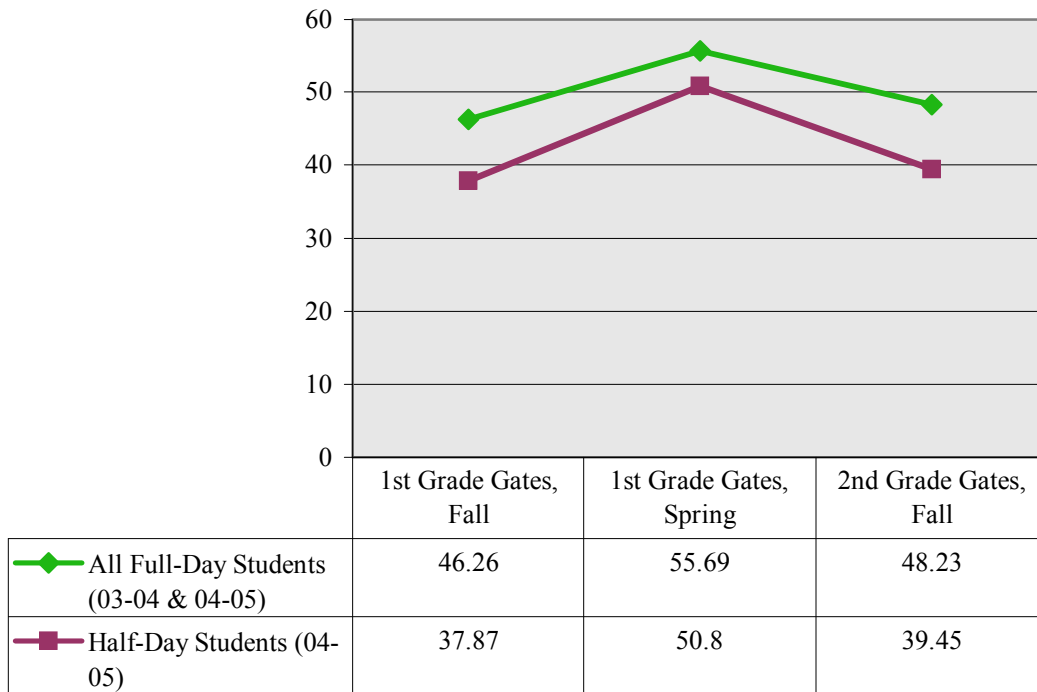
The graph below depicts the differences between racial groups based upon kindergarten schedule as half-day (04-05) or full-day (03-04 and 04-05).

**1st and Beginning 2nd Grade Gates-MacGinitie: Half- vs. Full-Day Kindergarten and Minority Status**



Finally, the graph below includes racial minority students only, without a white comparison group. Racial minority status was determined by a student’s record stating Asian, American Indian, Hispanic, or African American ethnicity. Of students who attended full-day kindergarten, 366 were considered racial minorities. Half-day kindergarten included 158 students listed as racial minorities.

**1st and Beginning 2nd Grade Gates-MacGinitie Outcomes:  
Racial Minority Students**



The trend seen in the other comparisons among demographic variables extends to racial minority students as well. Students performed better on the Gates-MacGinitie test in fall and spring of 1<sup>st</sup> grade, as well as fall of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade when they attended full-day kindergarten rather than half-day kindergarten.

## Summary Statement

In summary, students with a variety of risk factors attend school in District 191. According to results on the Gates-MacGinitie assessment in fall and spring of 1<sup>st</sup> grade as well as fall of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, attending full-day kindergarten is associated with higher achievement for students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, classified as English Language Learners, or who are racial minorities. It appears that full-day kindergarten education can help students with status risk factors to achieve at or near the national average through at least the beginning of second grade. The outcomes for third grade achievement have positive trend lines, although complete reporting of those findings and their relationship to the national average will not be available until fall of 2007.

## Newcomers to District 191: First and Second Grade Outcomes

As discussed earlier, 303 students enrolled in District 191 schools in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to become part of the 2003-04 kindergarten class after having attended kindergarten in another district. Another 215 newcomer students joined the 2004-05 kindergarten group in either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, for a total of 518 new students after kindergarten. Their scores on the Gates-MacGinitie are listed below. Data are not available to determine what type of kindergarten schedule the transfer students participated in.

Their scores fell somewhat below the students who had attended full-day kindergarten in District 191 and somewhat above the students who had attended half-day kindergarten in District 191 in the fall of 1<sup>st</sup> grade. In each subsequent round of testing, newcomer students scored similarly to half-day kindergarten students. The Gates testing for the 04-05 cohort, who are currently in second grade in this school year of 2006-07, has not yet occurred and thus are not included in the table below.

Cohort	1 <sup>st</sup> grade fall	1 <sup>st</sup> grade spring	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade fall	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade spring
Universal Full-Day (03-04)	56.19	65.75	62.37	62.33
Full-Day 04-05	57.83	65.19	56.35	TBD
Half-Day 04-05	45.37	57.74	47.19	TBD
<b>New to District</b>	<b>51.57</b>	<b>59.24</b>	<b>48.42</b>	<b>53.20</b>

**Note: Additional data about the numbers of students taking achievement tests can be found in Appendix A at the end of this report.**

## **Part Three**

# **Teacher Perceptions**

**Second Grade Teacher Perceptions of Students  
from Universal Full-day Kindergarten Cohort**

**Comparison of Second and First Grade Teachers' Perceptions  
of the Universal Full-day Kindergarten Cohort**

**First Grade Teachers' Comparison of Universal Full-day Kindergarten  
Cohort (2003-04 1<sup>st</sup> Grade) with the Fee-based Full-day and Half-day  
Kindergarten Cohort (2004-05 1<sup>st</sup> Grade)**

**Universal full-day kindergarten cohort:  
Survey of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher perceptions**

The District 191 teacher survey included the following questions:

1. With regard to the students in your class this year, during the *first 2-3 weeks of school* how would you rate their:

**Academic readiness/preparedness compared to students from previous years?** (circle one)

Much less	Less	No Difference	Better	Much better
1	2	3	4	5

**Social skills compared to students in previous years?** (circle one)

Much less	Less	No Difference	Better	Much better
1	2	3	4	5

**Emotional adjustment compared to students in previous years?** (circle one)

Much less	Less	No Difference	Better	Much better
1	2	3	4	5

2. Please describe any *changes you have made in your teaching* this year that relate to this year's students (e.g., changes in how you do small group instruction; pacing is faster/slower/more in-depth; etc.):
3. Are you using more or different curriculum materials this year? Please explain:
4. What, if anything, have parents commented to you about their child having been in an all-day kindergarten program?
5. For the students who are recently enrolled in District 191, has their academic or social adjustment been any more difficult because they were not in the district for kindergarten or first grade?  
 No       Yes, please explain
6. What is your *overall opinion* of an all-day kindergarten program? (Check one.)  
 It's good for all children.  
 It's best for bright kids needing the challenge.  
 It's best for students who need help with basic readiness.  
 I generally don't believe that all-day kindergarten is a good idea.
7. Please provide any additional comments you have about your experiences this year with students who have been in an All-Day Kindergarten program?

## SECOND GRADE TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS FROM UNIVERSAL FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN COHORT

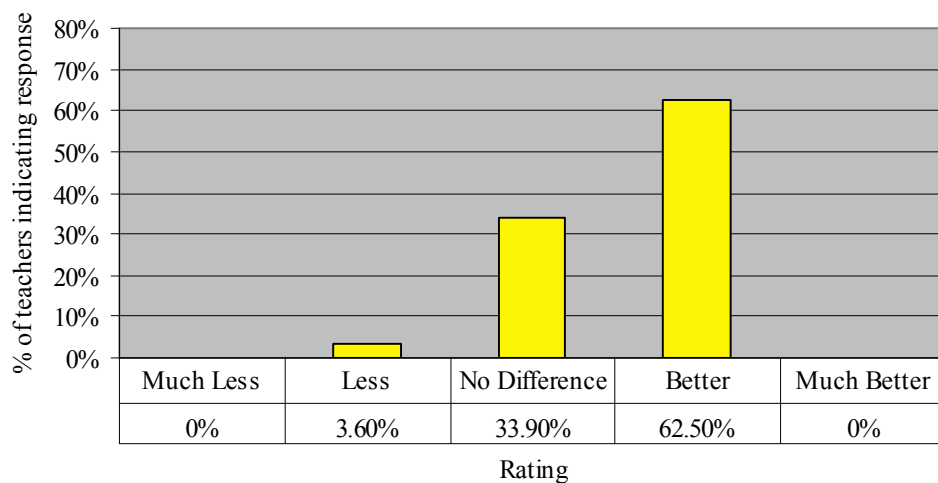
During the fall of 2005, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers in District 191 were asked to complete surveys about their instructional experiences during the first two to three weeks of school. Questions asked teachers to compare their experiences teaching the current class of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders with the previous year's 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. The current class of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students had attended universal full-day kindergarten two years ago. This group represents a unique cohort of students who had participated in such a kindergarten program as an entire class. Previous classes may have included students who attended either half-day or full-day kindergarten.

### QUESTION 1: ACADEMIC, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL READINESS

#### Academic readiness/preparedness compared to students from previous years

For the first question, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers were asked to compare the performance of their current students to students from previous years in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom in terms of academic readiness. Current 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students who attended kindergarten in District 191 attended full-day kindergarten. Students from outside of District 191 may not have attended kindergarten or attended ½ or full-day kindergarten. The results indicate that the majority of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers in District 191 (62.5%) perceived that their current students are better academically prepared than their students from previous years. The following table and graph highlight these responses:

**Academic Readiness of 2nd Grade Students**



In addition to indicating that current 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students are better academically prepared than students from previous years, several teachers (n = 13) expounded on this comparison by offering comments. The majority of teacher comments (n = 10; 71.4%) indicated that current 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students are better prepared in a number of curricular areas and necessary school skills than previous year's students. Only one teacher comment (7.1%) noted any difficulties of the current class of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students.

Examples of teacher comments are provided below. The rating assigned by the teacher providing the additional comment is included in parenthesis.

**Strengths:**

- ❖ *...I have seen an increase of ability to sit and work for longer periods, and their writing seems to be more developed than [in] the past...* (Score of 3 indicating No Difference).
- ❖ *My ESL [English as a Second Language] kids read at a higher level. Seem to be more readers at grade level or above than in past. Also seem to have better understanding of sentence structure.* (Score of 4 indicating Better).
- ❖ *Students appear to be much more settled and listen better at the beginning of school year. They are definitely more ready to learn!!* (Score of 4 indicating Better).

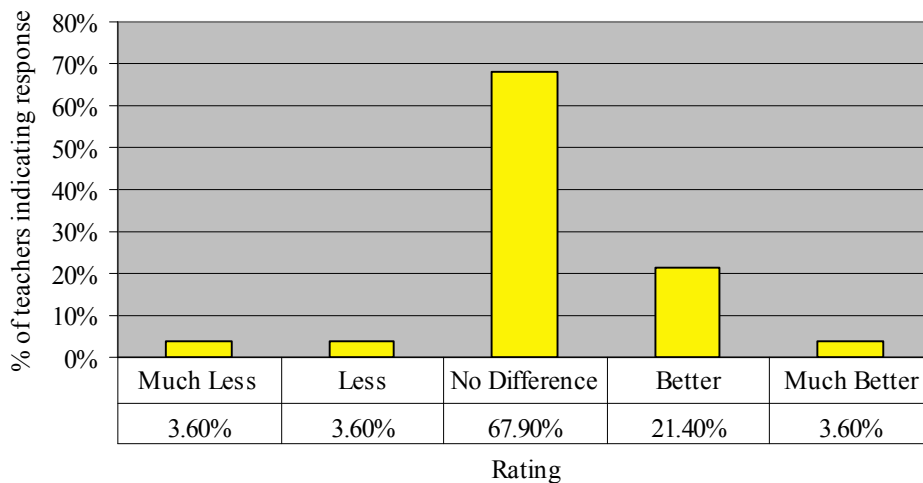
**Difficulties:**

- ❖ *It's very hard to compare years when we are looking at a new math curriculum etc. I have a good number of children who have trouble keeping up with work. I also see some skills lagging – for example, handwriting skills.* (Score of 3 indicating no difference).

**Social skills compared to students in previous years**

Teachers were asked to rate the social skills displayed by their 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students as compared to those of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students they taught in the past. The majority of teachers (67.9%) reported no difference in the social abilities of current and past 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students. The following table and graph depict these responses:

**Social Skills of 2nd Grade Students**



Some teachers (n = 7) provided additional comments to further describe their students' social skills. Three teacher comments (42.9%) mentioned difficulties current 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students have with social skills compared to students from previous years. Two teacher comments (28.6%) reported social skill strengths among this year's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class. Examples of comments from 2<sup>nd</sup>

grade teachers are provided below. The rating assigned by the teacher providing the comment is included in parentheses.

**Strengths:**

- ❖ *These students have much more self-control than students in the past.* (Score of 5 indicating Much Better).
- ❖ *[Students are] very sociable and interactive! [They are] ready to discuss information with each other and the group.* (Score of 3 indicating No Difference).

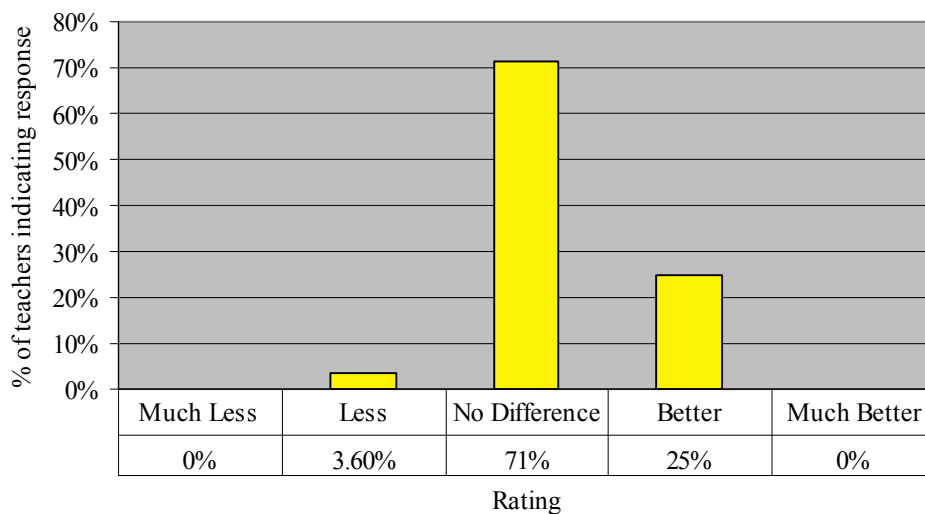
**Difficulties:**

- ❖ *I have a lot of students who have issues with friendship this year. I also have a pretty active group of boys who have trouble with partner games and group activities.* (Score of 2 indicating Less).
- ❖ *Very verbal, much more verbal but not always socially appropriate – a lot of blurting out.* (Score of 4 indicating Better).

**Emotional adjustment compared to students in previous years**

Finally, teachers were asked to rate the emotional adjustment of their 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students as compared to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students they taught in previous years. Similar to social skill development, results indicate that the majority of teachers (71.4%) see no difference in the emotional adjustment of their students this year as compared to students from previous years. The following table and graph highlight these responses:

**Emotional Adjustment of 2nd Grade Students**



Teachers (n = 7) included additional comments to elaborate on the emotional adjustment of their 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students. Two teacher comments (28.6%) mentioned students’ emotional adjustment strengths and one comment (14.3%) covered the difficulties their students have in terms of emotional adjustment. Examples of comments from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers are provided below. The rating assigned by the teacher providing the comment is included in parentheses.

**Strengths:**

- ❖ *Less crying and [students are] able to adjust faster to the long day.* (Score of 4 indicating Better).
- ❖ *Less tears than other years! [Fewer] kids upset about school situations.* (Score of 4 indicating Better).

**Difficulties:**

- ❖ *Less crying but lack self-control when issues are coming up at recess etc.* (Score of 3 indicating No Difference).

**QUESTION 2: CHANGES IN TEACHING**

Please describe any **changes you have made in your teaching** this year that relate to this year's students (e.g., changes in how you do small group instruction; pacing is faster/slower/more in-depth; etc.):

Most responses to this question (37/39; 94.9%) from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers revealed that they made changes in their teaching for their students. Of these comments, many (15/39, 38.5%) indicated that teachers made changes in their reading instruction. Several comments mentioned changes related to faster pacing (11/39; 28.2%); math instruction (4/39; 10.3%); increased student diversity (3/39; 7.7%); and writing (3/39; 7.7%). Some responses fit into more than one category. Numbers of comments indicating each type of change as well as examples of comments are provided in the table below.

**Reading (n = 15; 38.5%)**

- ❖ *Fewer students are below grade level readers so we have been able to create solid guided reading groups and pace faster.* (also coded as faster pacing)
- ❖ *Enrichment group for reading is larger – I have 8 students instead of 4 like other years.*
- ❖ *I purchased a set of National Geographic magazines that we are using to challenge the youngsters at and above grade level.*

**Faster pacing (n = 11; 28.8%)**

- ❖ *Started reading on day 2 instead of week 2. Started math on day 2– have done a lesson a day and am well ahead of last year's pacing.* (also coded as reading and math)
- ❖ *My pacing in all areas is faster, particularly with reading skills, like phonics. At the beginning of the year, I immediately started with curriculum. Generally, I wait a week to let students get more adjusted.* (also coded as reading)
- ❖ *Faster moving with high readers! Faster catch up with phonics and sight identification for decoding skills with lower readers! Faster literature groups with higher readers.* (also coded as reading)

**Math (n = 4; 10.3%)**

- ❖ *More math enrichment is something I had to add this year.*
- ❖ *Started math on day 2– have done a lesson a day and am well ahead of last year's pacing.* (also coded as faster pacing and reading)

**Writing (n = 3; 7.7%)**

- ❖ *I have not made any changes that I can think of besides the pacing of writing assignments and the depth in which they can be taught.* (also coded as faster pacing)
- ❖ *Top 7 students out of 28 are in enriched reading and writing group[s].* (also coded as faster pacing and reading)

**Diversity (n = 3; 7.7%)**

- ❖ *New students have come in from other districts and are very low, along with new ESL students. It*

*makes pacing changes very difficult.*

- ❖ *I have the most Title 1 students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade so my class tends to be lower academic[ally] but we are doing a push-in model this year to better meet the needs of all the students. Of the 24 children we have in the bottom group 15 were in full day kindergarten.*

**No Change (n = 2; 5.1%)**

- ❖ *Continuing plan from last year – moving about the same pace.*
- ❖ *I do not notice any significant difference in the group of students. In addition, I modify grouping, pacing, etc. with each group of students I teach.*

**Small Groups (n = 1; 2.6%)**

- ❖ *More small group instruction. Pacing is a bit faster. (also coded as faster pacing)*

**QUESTION 3: CURRICULUM USE**

*Are you using more or different curriculum materials this year? Please explain:*

Results from this question indicate that many District 191 teachers are using more or different curriculum materials this year than they have in previous years. While seven (22.6%) comments reported that teachers have not changed curriculum materials, the majority of comments (n = 24; 77.4%) indicate that teachers are using more or different materials for their 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students this year than in years past. Specifically, teachers cited the enrichment needs of students as a reason for adding or changing curriculum. Ten (32.3%) teachers reported that they are using a new math curriculum, called Everyday Math, in their classrooms. These responses were not included in this analysis, as this curriculum represents a district-wide change, and does not indicate changes based the particular characteristics of this group of students. Sample responses indicating no change and change in terms of using different curriculum materials are listed in the table below:

**Different curriculum materials (n = 24; 77.4%)**

- ❖ *Early Intervention Reading with low reading group.*
- ❖ *Extension activities for higher readers needed to expand their learning – non-fiction.*
- ❖ *More writing, more focus on writing skills, more use of writing, reading in content and math.*
- ❖ *More elaboration, more in depth, more writing because strong writing.*
- ❖ *Enrichment group uses different materials – level C, Six Traits Curriculum daily.*
- ❖ *High level – National Geographic Explorer*
- ❖ *More books from the literacy library.*

**No different curriculum materials (n = 7; 22.6%)**

- ❖ *I'm using the same curriculum; however I'm making adjustments in how I teach it.*
- ❖ *Because of our class size, my "top" 7 reading/writing students go into another class for reading/writing. It gives me more time to go into depth with vocabulary and comprehension with 2<sup>nd</sup> grade reading curriculum.*

**QUESTION 4: PARENT COMMENTS**

*What, if anything, have parents commented to you about their child having been in an all-day kindergarten program?*

The majority of comments made by District 191 teachers who responded to this survey (n = 19; 76%) revealed that teachers did not hear any response from parents. Of those comments revealing that teachers had heard from parents, the majority of comments (n = 5; 83.3%) were

positive, and only one (16.7%) was negative. Some responses fit into more than one category. Positive and negative parent comments are included below:

**General Positive Comments (n = 5; 83.3%)**

- ❖ *They felt fortunate that their children were in all day.*
- ❖ *They felt the adjustment to first grade was good.*
- ❖ *Parents have commented about how their child is better adjusted to full days of school and that their child seemed more relaxed about school than their older child.*
- ❖ *Parents appreciate the good start that their children got by all-day kindergarten! (They know they are bright and doing well because of it!)*
- ❖ *Parents have shared positive comments. It seems to especially ease the transition to 1<sup>st</sup> grade.*

**Negative comment (n = 1; 16.7%)**

- ❖ *My only comments about all-day kindergarten were about how tough the classes were behaviorally and how large the classes were at this school*

**QUESTION 5: RECENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS FROM OTHER DISTRICTS**

*For the students who are recently enrolled in District 191, has their academic or social adjustment been any more difficult because they were not in the district for kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade?*

Teachers were asked to compare the academic or social adjustment of students who are new to District 191 to those who attended school in the district in the past. The majority of teachers (18/28; 64.3%) responded that the academic or social adjustment of recently enrolled students has not been more difficult. One teacher noted that her new students attended all-day kindergarten at their previous schools. Nine teachers (32.1%) indicated that the social or academic adjustment of new students was more difficult. Seventeen teachers provided additional comments, some of which are provided below:

**No, the academic or social adjustment of new students has been more difficult (n = 18; 64.3%)**

- ❖ *I can tell more differences between kids who were in [the] piloted math program last year than I can from those in all day or not all day.*
- ❖ *They seemed to have blended right in. The new ones have said they were all day kindergarten at old school.*
- ❖ *If I didn't know who these students were, I would not be able to pick them out from other students who have been in the district 2 years.*
- ❖ *They have really good models.*

**Yes, the academic or social adjustment of new students has been more difficult (n = 9; 32.1%)**

- ❖ *Economic and family situations play a large part in their adjustment.*
- ❖ *All 4 of [the] Title 1 students were not in our school kindergarten.*
- ❖ *New students always struggle socially for about a month but academically most new students are lower.*
- ❖ *They are not aware of expectations. They are missing skills that many of our students have.*

## QUESTION 6: OVERALL OPINION OF ALL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

What is your *overall opinion* of an all-day kindergarten program?

For this question, teachers were asked to give their overall opinion of all-day kindergarten. The majority of teachers (20/28; 71.4%) responded that all-day kindergarten is *good for all children*. One teacher (3.6%) indicated that all-day kindergarten is *best for bright kids needing the challenge*; five teachers (17.9%) answered that it is *best for students who need help with basic readiness*; and three teachers (10.7%) responded that they *generally don't believe that all-day kindergarten is a good idea*. Four teachers included additional comments, all of which are included below, under the response the teacher chose:

### It's good for all children

- ❖ *Who are truly ready for kindergarten socially, academically, and emotionally.*

### It's best for students who need help with basic readiness

- ❖ *And it depends on the child and family circumstances.*

### I generally don't believe that all-day kindergarten is a good idea

- ❖ *I am still seeing the same spectrum of students from high to low that I have seen in past years.*

### No response selected

- ❖ *It really does depend on if children are academically and socially ready.*

## QUESTION 7: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

For this question, teachers were asked to provide additional comments about all-day kindergarten. A slight majority of comments (n = 8; 61.5%) mentioned positive outcomes of all-day kindergarten while only one comment (7.7%) included a negative outcome. Two comments (15.4%) expressed concerns about all-day kindergarten and one comment (7.7%) indicated that the teacher saw no benefit from all-day kindergarten. Some responses fit into more than one category. Sample comments are included in the following table:

### Positive outcomes (n = 8; 61.5%)

- ❖ *More than anything, these students seem more ready to learn and sit, to do independent work or group work, etc. They just seem more ready than the ½ day students.*
- ❖ *Socially, they seem the same as years past. Academically, they are very ready for all concepts and activities presented. Some are stronger in math due to the pilot last year.*
- ❖ *It helps the students that have not had a preschool experience or who have limited resources at home.*

### Concerns (n = 2; 15.4%)

- ❖ *I believe we are pushing children too soon. I believe we should let them be children. Kindergarten should be a social/emotional experience that gives bright students an opportunity to be challenged. I am concerned about the pressures these young students are feeling at an early age and how it will affect them in the future.*
- ❖ *I believe that kids will be kids—they will learn as they become developmentally ready. Many kids gain from all day kindergarten—but I don't think the gains for an average student are as big as one would think.*

### No Difference (n = 1; 7.7%)

❖ *I honestly feel that other than higher reading levels, I had to back some kids up levels to work on fluency and expression, I wouldn't have guessed they were all day versus half-day.*

**Negative outcome (n = 1; 7.7%)**

❖ *Their listening/following directions skills are poorer.*

## CONCLUSIONS

This survey asked 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers to compare and describe their experiences teaching a cohort of students who had attended a universal full-day kindergarten program with previous groups of children they had taught in the past. Teachers rated their current group of students as more academically prepared than previous classes, with little difference in the areas of social and emotional readiness. Most teachers in the district reported changing their use of curriculum materials to present a faster paced and more advanced level of work for students who came to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade with above average skills. The academic area in which the greatest gains were observed was reading, where teachers noted a greater number of students at the high reading levels.

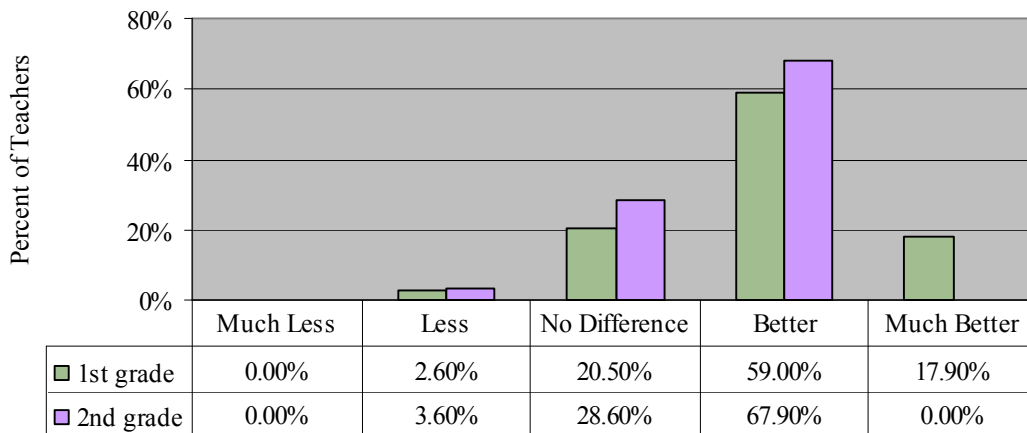
While teachers seldom hear parents' perspectives on the all-day kindergarten program, those parents who share information tend to convey positive thoughts. When asked about the academic and social adjustment of new students entering District 191, most teachers indicated that these students adapted well. Teachers who did see challenges for incoming students noted that the new enrollees tended to be relatively less advanced in academics than their District 191 peers. Overall, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers in District 191 shared a positive view of all-day kindergarten, indicating that they believe it is good for students.

## COMPARISON OF SECOND AND FIRST GRADE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE UNIVERSAL FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN COHORT

As documented earlier in this report, teachers of the universal full-day kindergarten cohort were surveyed during both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. In both years, teachers were asked to reflect on the academic, social and emotional readiness of their students, as well as any changes they had made in their teaching in order to accommodate this particular group of students. This allows a comparison between teacher perceptions of student skills both immediately following and at a one-year follow-up from the full-day kindergarten experience.

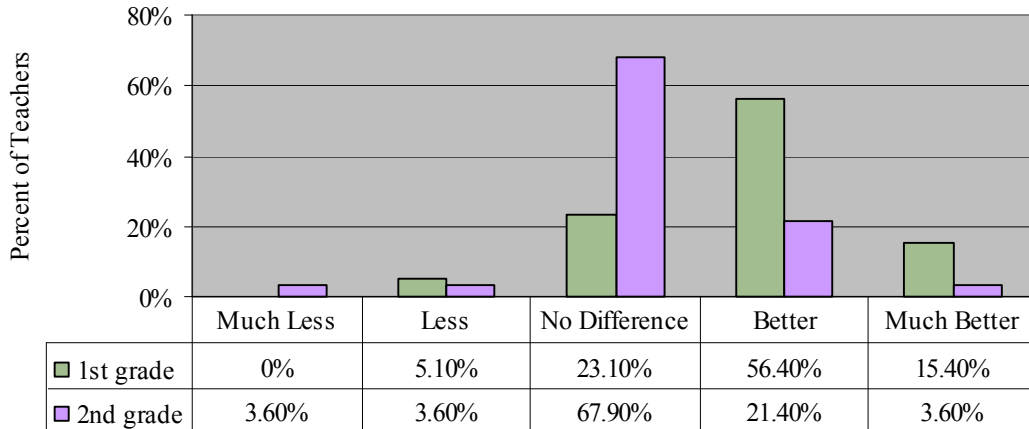
Second grade teachers saw this cohort's academic readiness in much the same way that their 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers had reported. When thinking about the universal full-day kindergarten cohort compared to their previous classes, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers saw them as better prepared overall. As depicted in the graph below, teachers in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade have experienced this cohort of students as being better prepared on average than previous classes.

**Teacher Perceptions of Universal Full-Day K Cohort in 1st and  
2nd Grades: Academic Readiness**



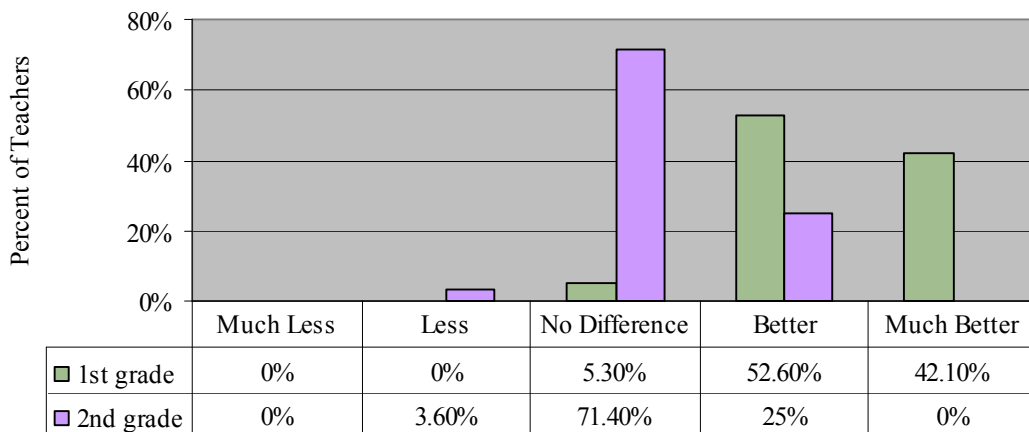
While 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers saw an increase in social skill development over previous years' classes, the differences had somewhat disappeared by 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Universal full-day kindergarten students were perceived as having skills no different from or somewhat better than previous classes by 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

**Teacher Perceptions of Universal Full-Day K Cohort in 1st and 2nd grades: Social Skills**



As 1<sup>st</sup> grade students, the universal full-day kindergarten cohort showed better to much better emotional adjustment than previous groups of 1<sup>st</sup> grade students. By second grade, teachers were more likely to report that this class was no different from other classes in terms of emotional development.

**Teacher Perceptions of Universal Full-Day K Cohort in 1st and 2nd Grades: Emotional Adjustment**



## **FIRST GRADE TEACHERS' COMPARISON OF UNIVERSAL FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN COHORT (THE 2003-04 1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE) WITH THE FEE-BASED FULL-DAY AND HALF-DAY KINDERGARTEN COHORT (THE 2004-05 1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE)**

This group of 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers completed the same survey in each of two years. The first administration was when their students consisted almost entirely of the universal full-day kindergarten cohort. The second administration of the same survey pertained to their class the following year which included students who had attended either fee-based full-day or free half-day kindergarten. Both sets of responses were compared to examine teachers' perceptions of similarities and differences in their experiences teaching these two different cohorts. Some schools had a higher concentration of 1<sup>st</sup> grade students who had received fee-based full-day kindergarten than other schools. This variation, however, did not appear to systematically affect teachers' responses about their students' preparedness.

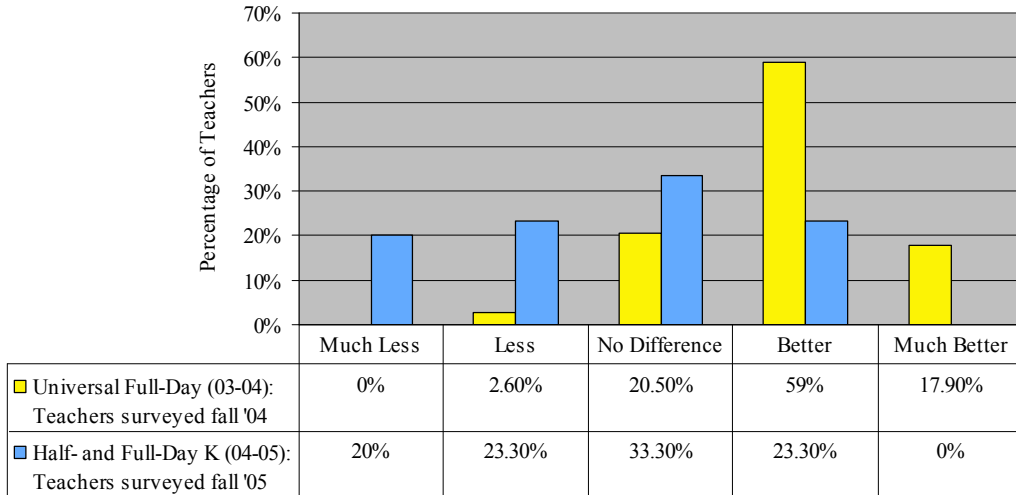
### **QUESTION 1: ACADEMIC, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL READINESS**

*With regard to the students in your class this year, during the **first 2-3 weeks of school** how would you rate their:*

#### **Academic readiness/preparedness compared to last year's students**

For the first question, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers were asked to compare the performance of their current students to last year's students in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom in terms of academic readiness. Current 1<sup>st</sup> grade students had the option of attending half-day or full-day kindergarten whereas the previous year's 1<sup>st</sup> grade students all attended full-day kindergarten. Results indicate that 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers in District 191 perceived a range of preparedness with the majority indicating no difference (33.3%) or less academic preparedness (43.3%) in this year's 1<sup>st</sup> grade students as compared to last year's students. That is, a mixed group of half- and full-day kindergarten students were perceived as similar to or less prepared than students who had attended universal full-day kindergarten in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

### 1st Grade Teachers' Perceptions of Student Academic Readiness



Survey responses across both years indicate that 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers saw an increase in academic preparedness of the universal full-day kindergarten cohort, but a move back toward less preparedness in the following class of mixed half-day and full-day kindergarten students.

In addition to indicating the amount of difference in the overall academic readiness of this year's 1<sup>st</sup> grade students as compared to last year's 1<sup>st</sup> grade students, teachers expounded on this comparison by offering comments. Six out of thirteen teacher comments (46.2%) described this year's 1<sup>st</sup> grade students as less prepared academically than last year's students. Two teacher comments (15.4%) described better academic preparation this year as compared to last year. Examples of teacher comments are provided below. The rating assigned by the teacher providing the additional comment is included in parentheses.

#### Strengths:

- ❖ *All day kids were very ready. Half day kids were much less prepared.* (Score of 3 indicating No Difference).
- ❖ *Student confidence level in writing was better. They are more willing to risk at writing words – guessing and going with sounds.* (Score of 4 indicating Better).

#### Difficulties:

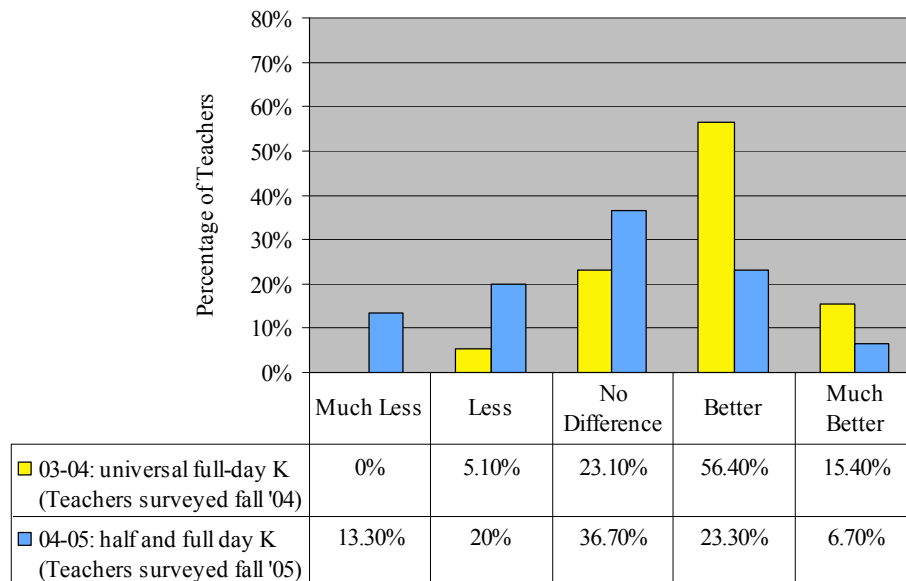
- ❖ *Kindergarten expectations were not met for many students.* (Score of 1 indicating Much Less).
- ❖ *Many with little to no letter/sound awareness, little awareness of print conventions, much less English proficiency, [and] much less ability to focus on tasks.* (Score of 1 indicating Much Less).

## Social skills compared to last year's students

Teachers were asked to rate the social skills displayed by their 1st grade students as compared to those of the 1st grade students they taught last year. Overall, the results concerning social skills reveal that the 36.7% of teachers reported no difference in the social abilities of this year's 1st grade students as compared to last year's students.

Similar to academic readiness, teachers saw better social skills in the universal full-day kindergarten cohort than they had seen in previous classes. The 04-05 class of mixed half-day and full-day kindergarten students were likely to have fewer or much fewer social skills than their predecessors.

**1st Grade Teachers' Perceptions of Social Skills**



Teachers provided additional comments to further describe their students' social skills. Over half of the teachers who provided additional comments (n=5; 55.6%) mentioned difficulties their current students have with social skills as compared to last year's students. Two teachers (22.2%) reported social skill strengths among this year's 1<sup>st</sup> grade class. Examples of comments from 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers are provided below. The rating assigned by the teacher providing the comment is included in parentheses.

### Strengths:

- ❖ *Students came in with very appropriate interactions and social skills. (Score of 3 indicating No Difference).*
- ❖ *Again, my group has been exposed to many social experiences with parents. (Score of 5 indicating Much Better).*

### Difficulties:

- ❖ *The work habits of ½ day kindergarten children were much less mature. (Score of 3 indicating No Difference).*

Difference).

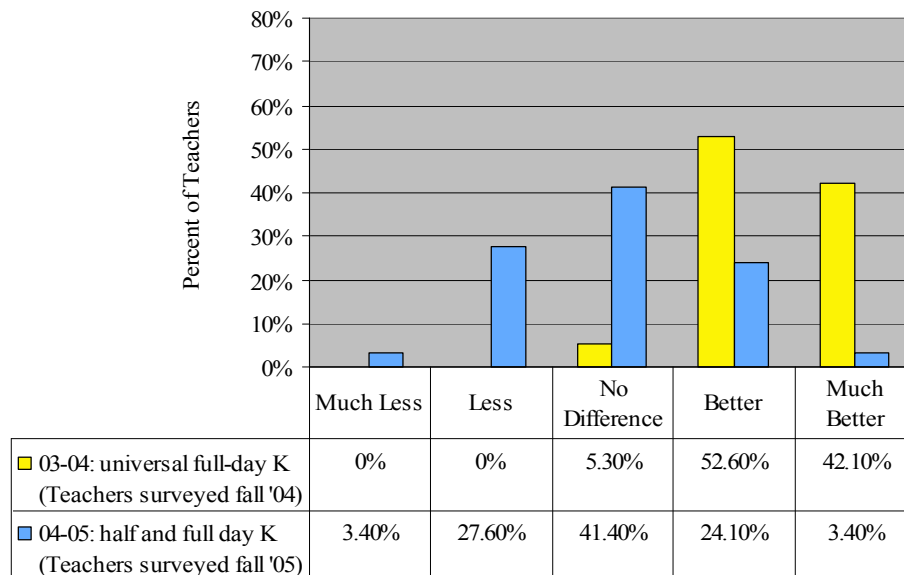
- ❖ *Some not as used to all day everyday.* (Score of 2 indicating Less).
- ❖ *Difficult to follow directions – poor listening skills.* (Score of 1 indicating Much Less).
- ❖ *My group needs a lot of work to develop their social skills... Social skills can hinder academic performance.* (Score of 2 indicating Less).

### Emotional adjustment compared to last year’s students

Teachers were asked to rate the emotional adjustment of their 1<sup>st</sup> grade students as compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade students they taught last year. The results indicate that 41.4% of teachers see no difference in the emotional adjustment of their students this year or less emotional adjustment as compared to last year’s students.

The trend established in academic readiness and social skills continues with emotional adjustment. 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers indicated that the universal full-day kindergarten cohort came to 1<sup>st</sup> grade with better to much better emotional adjustment than previous years of classes. The trend changed somewhat the following year, when a class of half-day and full-day kindergarten students came to 1<sup>st</sup> grade somewhat less prepared than the universal full-day cohort. A large percentage of teachers indicated no difference between the two groups, however. The following table and graph highlight these responses:

**1st Grade Teachers' Perceptions of Emotional Adjustment**



Teachers included additional comments to further explain the emotional adjustment of their 1<sup>st</sup> grade students. Three teachers (30%) commented about their students’ emotional adjustment strengths and an equal number (30%, n=3) commented on the difficulties their students have in

terms of emotional adjustment. Examples of comments from 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers are provided below. The rating assigned by the teacher providing the comment is included in parentheses.

**Strengths:**

- ❖ *Students adjusted well to the classroom setting. (Score of 3 indicating No Difference).*
- ❖ *There have been [fewer] tears, initially. Students also are more adjusted to full days. (Score of 4 indicating Better).*
- ❖ *[Fewer] complaints about the long day, however, still wanted “choice/play” time. Lunch was much smoother as they knew how to enter their PIN numbers. (Score of 4 indicating Better).*

**Difficulties:**

- ❖ *Immature group. (Score of 2 indicating Less).*
- ❖ *Took longer to not hear, “when is lunch,” or “when do we go home?” By end of Sept., it was fine. More tears, more reacting versus problem solving skills. (Score of 2 indicating Less).*

**QUESTION 2: CHANGES IN TEACHING**

*Please describe any changes you have made in your teaching this year that relate to this year’s students (e.g., changes in how you do small group instruction; pacing is faster/slower/more in-depth; etc.)*

Of the 29 teachers completing this survey, 23 (79.3%) provided comments to describe whether they had made changes in their teaching during the current school year. Some teachers provided more than one comment, and most comments (30/36; 83.3%) described changes in teaching. Of those comments indicating a change in teaching, the majority of responses (13/30, 43.3%) indicated that teachers had slowed down their pacing. Several teachers mentioned changes in their teaching related to pacing, increased use of small groups, increased student diversity, fewer problems with behavior, and the curricular areas of reading and writing. Some responses fit into more than one category. Numbers of comments indicating each type of change as well as examples of comments are provided in the table below.

**Slower pacing (n = 13; 36.1%)**

- ❖ *Last year I skipped a lot of kindergarten review units for spelling, writing, and phonics. This year I reviewed all of that.*
- ❖ *My pacing seems to be slower this year. The overall ability of my students is lower.*
- ❖ *My group this year is far more academically challenged – I spend more time with the absolute basics of literacy and math instruction.*

**No Change (n = 6; 16.7%)**

- ❖ *Each year I look at the individual needs of students. There is always a range of abilities in all subject areas. You group students according to their own needs and rate of progress.*
- ❖ *Nothing different from what I’ve done in the past. There has always been a wide range of abilities, etc. to deal with. That is the “nature of the beast”, called 1<sup>st</sup> grade.*
- ❖ *Very little because you still have to go through establishing routines...*

**Diversity (n = 4; 11.1%)**

- ❖ *I have found that most of the children coming from the ½ day kindergarten program are from low income families thus widening the gap between the “haves” and “have nots” and making it more challenging for me to meet their needs.*
- ❖ *Couldn't begin guided reading groups as soon because my class is so full of haves and have nots. The difference is obvious between the full and ½ day kids. But often the ½ day kids are also lacking in home support, verbal development, etc. and so they are so far behind.*
- ❖ *The majority of my students this year are either far below average (6 kids) or above average (6 kids), so I'm doing less whole group instruction...I'm probably doing more individualized instruction. (also coded as small groups)*

**Small Groups (n = 4; 11.1%)**

- ❖ *I am able to do more small groups because I have [fewer] discipline problems. (also coded as behavior)*
- ❖ *More small groups, more pictures when giving directions, more modeling. Pacing is the same.*
- ❖ *Small group “push-in” model has only been in place for a couple weeks. We have combined all first graders and made groups through [the] whole first grade so we are better able to target needs.*

**Reading (n = 3; 8.3%)**

- ❖ *Because many students needed to review the kindergarten skills, we spent a great deal of time on the review unit. I spend a majority of my small group time teaching the letters and sounds. (also coded as slower pacing)*
- ❖ *I have had to slow down this year. Seven weeks into school I am still teaching letters, sounds, sight words they should have learned in kindergarten. (also coded as slower pacing)*

**Behavior (n = 3; 8.3%)**

- ❖ *My children need more repetition of directions and basic procedures and basic academics. They tend to be poor listeners.*
- ❖ *New math – very intense – can't get through everything as deeply as I'd like due to social immaturity, attention span, etc... (also coded as diversity)*

**Improvement (n = 3; 8.3%)**

- ❖ *I have increased my expectations in their writing assignments. Many students are capable of writing not just complete sentences, but detailed sentences.*
- ❖ *I always do flexible grouping for reading and some for math – but not the 1<sup>st</sup> few weeks. It does seem [that] whole group intro reading moves much faster – students know what I am teaching.*

**QUESTION 3: CURRICULUM USE**

*Are you using more or different curriculum materials this year? Please explain:*

Results from this question indicated that District 191 teachers are using more or different curriculum materials this year. While nineteen (42.4%) teachers reported that they are not using more or different curriculum materials than in the past, more (n = 26; 57.8%) teachers are using more or different materials for their 1<sup>st</sup> grade students this year. Teachers reported pulling in lower level materials and reviewing more in order to teach reading and kindergarten skills. In addition, fourteen (38.9%) teachers revealed that they are using a new math curriculum, called Everyday Math, in their classrooms. This curriculum was adopted by the entire district for the current school year and represents a mandated change. Some responses fit into more than one

category. Sample responses indicating no change and change in terms of using more difficult, less difficult, and different curriculum materials are listed in the table below:

<p><b>No different curriculum materials (n = 19; 42.4%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>No, similar. I have a very wide span of activity and developmental levels, so many children need one on one help.</i></li> <li>❖ <i>I am using the same curriculum materials as last year and modifying when necessary.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Less difficult curriculum materials (n = 7; 15.6%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Different – I'm using lower level reading books and trying to build discrimination between basic words "I" and "the".</i></li> <li>❖ <i>With my large range of abilities, I have had to pull in more review curriculum to help build the kindergarten skills.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Different curriculum materials (n = 2; 4.4%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>More materials for ESL students.</i></li> <li>❖ <i>Less whole group reading – more small groups.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>More difficult curriculum materials (n = 1; 2.2%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Different...challenges for those reading Harry Potter level chapter books!</i></li> </ul>

#### QUESTION 4: PARENT COMMENTS

*Have parents said anything to you about having or not having all-day kindergarten available to them (e.g., cost, benefit, etc.)?*

A slight majority of comments made by District 191 teachers who responded to this survey (n = 17; 54.8%) indicated that teachers did not hear any response from parents and four comments (12.9%) revealed that teachers heard positive responses from parents. Eight comments (25.8%) revealed that teachers received parent comments about the cost of full-day kindergarten and the inequity of having full-day kindergarten offered at a cost in District 191. Some responses fit into more than one category. Positive comments are included below along with parent comments on the cost and inequity of the all-day kindergarten program in District 191:

<p><b>Cost and equity-related comments (n = 8; 25.8%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>There are concerns about equity – “haves” and “have-nots.”</i></li> <li>❖ <i>Yes, two were very unhappy about having to pay. It is an injustice to those who do not have full-day – they're not ready and the whole day must wait for them.</i></li> <li>❖ <i>Cost is a major factor. The full day program filled and one parent could not get her child enrolled.</i></li> <li>❖ <i>Two parents felt they needed to have their child in all-day, but their budgets wouldn't allow them.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>General Positive Comments (n = 4; 12.9%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Parents have said [that] all-day kindergarten provides less hassles regarding day care. “Stay at home” moms would rather have half day kindergarten.</i></li> <li>❖ <i>Several comments about really liking all-day kindergarten. Two parents who chose half day told me they were happy with their decision (these are 2 of the highest performing kids in my class).</i></li> </ul>

## QUESTION 5: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

*Please provide any additional comments you have about your perceptions or opinions about all-day kindergarten.*

The final question in the survey asked teachers to provide additional comments on their perceptions or opinions of all-day kindergarten. The majority of teacher comments about all-day kindergarten (n = 21; 60%) were positive in nature, 11.4% of comments addressed concerns, and 22.9% of comments concerned inequity. Some responses fit into more than one category. Examples of comments are provided in the table below:

<p><b>Positive comments (n = 21; 60%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <i>I see increased number sense, better letter/sound sense with those who had all day kindergarten. Five out of the 13 who had all day came in reading at the end of first-grade level. I am so convinced that all children should have all day kindergarten!</i></li><li>❖ <i>All day students are better prepared academically; even the lowest ones came in knowing nearly all their sounds and letters and some basic sight words. School culture was more in place, so students were better able to focus and learn.</i></li><li>❖ <i>All day kindergarten is an important option for all families. It's a great opportunity to provide the best for children.</i></li><li>❖ <i>I think the students definitely are more ready for a full day and all [that] entails. Their writing also was improved.</i></li></ul>
<p><b>Comments about inequity (n = 8; 22.9%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <i>Often the kids who need the foundation of all day the most are the ones not in that program. You find they are experiencing inequity from the start of their educational careers.</i></li><li>❖ <i>I believe All Day Kindergarten should be reinstated for all – most of the kids who attend are the “haves” – most who don't attend are the “have nots.” Many of the “have nots” are already significantly behind in readiness for school and academics. This only widens the gap.</i></li><li>❖ <i>I believe either all have ½ or all have whole. Inequity does not need to be fostered by 191.</i></li></ul>
<p><b>Comments about concerns (n = 4; 11.4%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ <i>I believe all day kindergarten is a wonderful program. I also feel that there needs to be an emphasis on using the extra contact time for worthwhile teaching instead of adding in more play time.</i></li><li>❖ <i>I am concerned that the full day kindergarten program has placed too much emphasis on academics and not enough on social skills, and the arts.</i></li></ul>

## CONCLUSIONS

This survey asked teachers to compare their experiences teaching a class of 1st grade students who all had attended full-day kindergarten with a class composed of some half-day and some full-day kindergarteners. Teacher ratings of academic readiness, social skills and emotional adjustment revealed that the universal full-day cohort of students entered first grade generally better prepared than had other classes, either before or after that group. Also, the qualitative responses of the teachers indicated large differences.

Several teachers reported a slower pace of curriculum during the current year (with the greater range of kindergarten experiences) than they had used in with the previous class of 1st grade

students who had attended full day kindergarten as a cohort. Both teachers and parents voiced the concern that offering full-day kindergarten to some students for a fee, while others attended half-day kindergarten was inequitable. On a related note, teachers frequently wrote about the wide diversity of skills in their classes between those who had attended full-day kindergarten and those who had attended half-day kindergarten.

In sum, it appears that the two groups of 1st grade students were similar in many ways, particularly in their social skills and emotional adjustment. Academically, the previous year's 1st grade class seems to have had a somewhat higher level of preparedness with less need for review of basic skills than the current 1st grade class. As a result, the lower level of academic preparedness led to a slower curricular pace than teachers had experienced in the previous year.

## **Overall Summary for All Teacher Surveys**

Two years of teacher surveys indicate that some of the initial benefits of universal full-day kindergarten continue through second grade, while others are somewhat reduced. Both 1st and 2nd grade teachers saw the universal full-day group as better prepared than previous classes in the area of academic readiness. First grade teachers saw similar benefits in the areas of social skills and emotional adjustment. By 2nd grade, however, differences between the universal full-day kindergarten group and other classes were not as large in social skills and emotional adjustment, but differences continued to be perceived in the area of academic readiness. With the relative mobility of the kindergarten population, meaning that the universal full-day cohort was being significantly diluted with a wider mix of kindergarten backgrounds among the classmates, it is not surprising that the teachers are beginning to perceive fewer apparent differences as the grade levels rise.